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MERRY WIVES

OF

WINDSOR,

A COMEDY,

REVISED BY

J. P. KEMBLE;

AND NOW FIRST PUBLISHED AS IT IS ACTED AT

THE THEATRE ROYAL

IN

Covent Garden.

LONDON:

PRINTED FOR J. RIDGWAY, YORK STREET, ST. JAMES'S SQUARE;

AND SOLD IN [illegible]

1804.

[*Price Two Shillings.*]

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THE MERRY WIVES

OF

WINDSOR.

ACT I.

SCENE I.

Before Page's House.

Enter SHALLOW, SLENDER, *and* EVANS.

Shal. SIR Hugh, persuade me not: I will make a Star-chamber matter of it: if he were twenty sir John Falstaffs, he shall not abuse Robert Shallow, esquire.

Slen. In the county of Gloster, justice of peace, and *coram.*

Shal. Ay, cousin Slender, and *cust-ulorum.*

Slen. Ay, and *rat-ulorum* too; and a gentleman born, master parson; who writes himself *armigero*; in any bill, warrant, quittance, or obligation, *armigero.*

Shal. Ay, that we do; and have done any time these three hundred years.

Slen. All his successors, gone before him, have done 't; and all his ancestors, that come after him, may: they may give the dozen white luces in their coat.

Shal. It is an old coat.

Eva. The dozen white louses do become an old coat well; it agrees well, passant: it is a familiar beast to man, and signifies—love.

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Slen. I may quarter, coz.

Shal. You may, by marrying.

Eva. It is marring, indeed, if he quarter it.

Shal. Not a whit.

Eva. Yes, py 'r-lady; if he has a quarter of your coat, there is but three skirts for yourself, in my simple conjectures: but that is all one: If sir John Falstaff have committed disparagements unto you, I will be glad to do my benevolence, to make atonements and compromises between you.

Shal. Ha! o' my life, if I were young again, the sword should end it.

Eva. It is petter that friends is the sword, and end it: and there is also another device in my prain, which, peradventure, prings goot discretions with it: There is Anne Page, which is daughter to master George Page, which is pretty virginity.

Slen. Mistress Anne Page? she has brown hair, and speaks small like a woman.

Eva. It is that very person for all the 'orld, as just as you will desire; and seven hundred pounds of monies, and gold, and silver, is her grandsire, upon his death's-bed, give, when she is able to overtake seventeen years old: it were a goot motion, if we leave our pribbles and prabbles, and desire a marriage between master Abraham, and mistress Anne Page.

Shal. Did her grandsire leave her seven hundred pounds?

Eva. Ay, and her father is make her a petter penny.

Shal. I know the young gentlewoman; she has good gifts.

Eva. Seven hundred pounds, and possibilities, is good gifts.

Shal. Well, let us see honest master Page: Is Falstaff there?

Eva. Shall I tell you a lie? I do despise a liar, as I do despise one that is false; or, as I despise one that is not true. The knight, sir John, is there; and, I

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beseech you, be ruled by your well-willers. I will peat the door for master Page. [*Knocks at the door.*] What, hoa! 'pless your house here!

Enter PAGE.

Page. Who 's there?

Eva. Here is your friend, and justice Shallow: and here young master Slender; that, peradventures, shall tell you another tale, if matters grow to your likings.

Page. I am glad to see your worships well: I thank you for my venison, master Shallow.

Shal. Master Page, I am glad to see you; Much good do it your good heart! I wish'd your venison better; it was ill kill'd:—How doth good mistress Page?—and I thank you always with my heart, la; with my heart.

Page. Sir, I thank you.—I am glad to see you, good master Slender.

Slen. How does your fallow greyhound, sir? I heard say, he was outrun on Cotsale.

Page. It could not be judg'd, sir.

Shal. Is sir John Falstaff here?

Page. Sir, he is within; and I would I could do a good office between you.

Eva. It is spoke as a christians ought to speak.

Shal. He hath wrong'd me, master Page.

Page. Sir, he doth in some sort confess it.

Shal. If it be confess'd, it is not redress'd; is not that so, master Page? He hath wrong'd me;—indeed, he hath;—at a word, he hath;—believe me;—Robert Shallow, esquire, saith, he is wrong'd.

Page. Here comes sir John.

Enter FALSTAFF, ROBIN, BARDOLPH, PISTOL, *and* NYM.

Fal. Now, master Shallow; you 'll complain of me to the king?

Shal. Knight, you have beaten my men, kill'd my deer, and broke open my lodge.

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Fal. But not kiss'd your keeper's daughter?

Shal. Tut, a pin! this shall be answer'd.

Fal. I will answer it straight;—I have done all this:—That is now answer'd.

Shal. The council shall know this.

Fal. 'T were better for you, if 'twere known in counsel; you 'll be laugh'd at.

Eva. Pauca verba, sir John; good worts.

Fal. Good worts! good cabbage:—Slender, I broke your head; What matter have you against me?

Slen. Marry, sir, I have matter in my head against you; and against your coney-catching rascals, Bardolph, Nym, and Pistol.

Bar. You Banbury cheese!

Slen. Ay, it is no matter.

Pist. How now, Mephostophilus?

Slen. Ay, it is no matter.

Nym. Slice, I say: slice! that 's my humour.

Slen. Where 's Simple, my man?——can you tell, cousin?

Eva. Peace: I pray you! Now let us understand: There is three umpires in this matter, as I understand: that is—master Page, *fidelicet*, master Page; and there is myself, *fidelicet*, myself; and the three party is, lastly and finally, mine host of the Garter.

Page. We three, to hear it, and end it between them.

Eva. Fery goot: I will make a prief of it in my nôte-book; and we will afterwards 'ork upon the cause, with as great discreetly as we can.

Fal. Pistol,——

Pist. He hears with ears.

Eva. What phrase is this, *He hears with ear?* Why, it is affectations.

Fal. Pistol, did you pick master Slender's purse?

Slen. Ay, by these gloves, did he, (or I would I might never come in mine own great chamber again else,) of seven groats in mill-sixpences, and two

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Edward shovel-boards, that cost me two shilling and two pence apiece of Yead Miller, by these gloves.

Fal. Is this true, Pistol?

Eva. No; it is false, if it is a pick-purse.

Pist. Ha, thou mountain-foreigner!——Sir John, and master mine,
I combat challenge of this latten bilboe:
Word of denial in thy labras here;
Word of denial: froth and scum, thou ly'st.

Slen. By these gloves, then 't was he.

Nym. Be avis'd, sir, and pass good humours: I will say, *marry trap*, with you, if you run the nut-hook's humour on me: that is the very note of it.

Slen. By this hat, then he in the red face had it: for though I cannot remember what I did when you made me drunk, yet I am not altogether an ass.

Fal. What say you, Scarlet and John?

Bard. Why, sir, for my part, I say, the gentleman had drunk himself out of his five sentences.

Eva. It is his five senses: fie, what the ignorance is!

Bard. And being fap, sir, was, as they say, cashier'd; and so conclusions pass'd the careires.

Slen. Ay, you spake in Latin then too; but 't is no matter: I 'll never be drunk whilst I live again, but in honest, civil company, for this trick: if I be drunk, I 'll be drunk with those that have the fear of heaven, and not with drunken knaves.

Eva. So heaven 'udge me, that is a virtuous mind.

Fal. You hear all these matters deny'd, gentlemen; you hear it.

Enter ANNE PAGE *with wine, followed by Mrs.* PAGE.

Page. Nay, daughter, carry the wine in; we 'll drink within.

[*Exit* A. PAGE.

Slen. O heaven! this is mistress Anne Page.

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Enter Mrs. FORD.

Page. How now, mistress Ford?

Fal. Mistress Ford, by my troth, you are very well met: by your leave, good mistress. [*Kissing her.*

Page. Wife, bid these gentlemen welcome:—— Come, we have a hot venison pasty to dinner; come, gentlemen, I hope, we shall drink down all unkindness.

[*Exeunt all but* SHALLOW, SLENDER, *and* EVANS.

Slen. I had rather than forty shillings, I had my book of songs and sonnets here:—

Enter SIMPLE.

How now, Simple?—where have you been? I must wait on myself, must I? You have not the book of riddles about you, have you?

Sim. Book of riddles! why, did you not lend it to Alice Shortcake upon Allhallowmas last, a fortnight afore Michaelmas?

Shal. Come, coz; come, coz; we stay for you. A word with you, coz: marry, this, coz; There is, as 't were, a tender, a kind of tender, made afar off, by sir Hugh here;—Do you understand me?

Slen. Ay, sir, you shall find me reasonable; if it be so, I shall do that that is reason.

Shal. Nay, but understand me.

Slen. So I do, sir.

Eva. Give ear to his motions, master Slender: I will description the matter to you, if you be capacity of it.

Slen. Nay, I will do, as my cousin Shallow says: I pray you, pardon me; he 's a justice of peace in his country, simple though I stand here.

Eva. But that is not the question; the question is concerning your marriage—

Shal. Ay, there 's the point, sir.

Eva. Marry, is it; the very point of it;—to mistress Anne Page.

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Slen. Why, if it be so, I will marry her, upon any reasonable demands.

Eva. But can you affection the 'oman? let us command to know that of your mouth, or of your lips; for divers philosophers hold, that the lips is parcel of the mouth;—Therefore, precisely, can you carry your good-will to the maid?

Shal. Cousin Abraham Slender, can you love her?

Slen. I hope, sir,—I will do, as it shall become one that would do reason.

Eva. Nay, you must speak possitable, if you can carry her your desires towards her.

Shal. That you must: Will you, upon good dowry, marry her?

Slen. I will do a greater thing than that, upon your request, cousin, in any reason.

Shal. Nay, conceive me, conceive me, sweet coz; what I do, is to pleasure you, coz: Can you love the maid?

Slen. I will marry her, sir, at your request; but if there be no great love in the beginning, yet heaven may decrease it upon better acquaintance, when we are marry'd, and have more occasion to know one another: I hope, upon familiarity will grow more contempt; but if you say, *marry her*, I will marry her, that I am freely dissolv'd, and dissolutely.

Eva. It is a fery discretion answer; save, the faul' is in the 'ort dissolutely: the 'ort is, according to our meaning, resolutely;—his meaning is good.

Shal. Ay, I think my cousin meant well.

Slen. Ay, or else I would I might be hang'd, la.

Enter ANNE PAGE.

Shal. Here comes fair mistress Anne;—Would I were young, for your sake, mistress Anne!

Anne. The dinner is on the table; my father desires your worship's company.

Shal. I will wait on him, fair mistress Anne.

[*Exit* SHALLOW.

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Eva. Od's plessed will! I will not be absence at the grace.

[*Exit* EVANS.

Anne. Will 't please your worship to come in, sir?

Slen. No, I thank you, forsooth, heartily; I am very well.

Anne. The dinner attends you, sir.

Slen. I am not a-hungry, I thank you, forsooth:—Go, sirrah, for all you are my man, go, wait upon my cousin Shallow:—

[*Exit* SIMPLE.

A justice of peace sometime may be beholden to his friend for a man:—I keep but three men and a boy yet, till my mother be dead: But what though? yet I live like a poor gentleman born.

Anne. I may not go in without your worship: they will not sit, till you come.

Slen. I'faith, I'll eat nothing: I thank you as much as though I did.

Anne. I pray you, sir, walk in.

Slen. I had rather walk here, I thank you: I bruis'd my shin the other day with playing at sword and dagger with a master of fence; three veneys for a dish of stew'd prunes; and, by my troth, I cannot abide the smell of hot meat since.—Why do your dogs bark so? be there bears i' the town?

Anne. I think, there are, sir; I heard them talk'd of.

Slen. I love the sport well; but I shall as soon quarrel at it, as any man in England:—You are afraid, if you see the bear loose, are you not?

Anne. Ay, indeed, sir.

Slen. That's meat and drink to me now; I have seen Sackerson loose, twenty times; and have taken him by the chain: but, I warrant you, the women have so cry'd and shriek'd at it, that it pass'd:—but women, indeed, cannot abide 'em; they are very ill-favour'd rough things.

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Enter PAGE.

Page. Come, gentle master Slender, come; we stay for you.

Slen. I 'll eat nothing; I thank you, sir.

Page. By cock and pye, you shall not choose, sir; come, come.

[*Exit* PAGE.

Slen. Nay, pray you, lead the way.

Anne. Come on, sir.

Slen. Mistress Anne, yourself shall go first.

Anne. Not I, sir; pray you, keep on.

Slen. Truly, I will not go first; truly-la: I will not do you that wrong.

Anne. I pray you, sir.

Slen. I 'll rather be unmannerly, than troublesome: you do yourself wrong, indeed-la.

[*Exeunt.*

SCENE II.

A Room in Page's House.

Enter EVANS, *with a letter, and* SIMPLE.

Eva. Go your ways, and ask of Dr. Caius' house, which is the way: and there dwells one mistress Quickly, which is in the manner of his nurse, or his dry nurse, or his cook, or his laundry, his washer, and his wringer.

Sim. Well, sir.

Eva. Nay, it is petter yet:—give her this letter; for it is a 'oman that altogether 's acquaintance with mistress Anne Page; and the letter is, to desire and require her to solicit your master's desires to mistress Anne Page: I pray you, be gone.

[*Exit* SIMPLE.

I will make an end of my dinner; there 's pippins and cheese to come.

[*Exit* EVANS.

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SCENE III.

The Garter Inn.

Enter FALSTAFF, *Host, and* BARDOLPH.

Fal. Mine host of the Garter,—

Host. What says my bully-rook? speak scholarly and wisely.

Fal. Truly, mine host, I must turn away some of my followers.

Host. Discard, bully Hercules; cashier: let them wag; trot, trot.

Fal. I sit at ten pounds a week.

Host. Thou 'rt an emperor, Cæsar, Keisar, and Pheezar. I will entertain Bardolph; he shall draw, he shall tap: said I well, bully Hector?

Fal. Do so, good mine host.

Host. I have spoke; let him follow: Let me see thee froth, and lime: I am at a word; follow.

[*Exit Host.*

Fal. Bardolph, follow him; a tapster is a good trade: An old cloak makes a new jerkin; a wither'd servingman, a fresh tapster: Go; adieu.

Bard. It is a life that I have desir'd: I will thrive.

[*Exit* BARDOLPH.

Fal. I am glad, I am so acquit of this tinderbox; his thefts were too open: his filching was like an unskilful singer, he kept not time.

Enter PISTOL, NYM, *and* ROBIN.

Fal. Which of you know Ford of this town?

Pist. I ken the wight; he is of substance good.

Fal. My honest lads, I will tell you what I am about.

Pist. Two yards and more.

Fal. No quips now, Pistol: Indeed, I am in the waist two yards about: but I am now about no waste; I am about thrift. Briefly, I do mean to make love to Ford's wife; I spy entertainment in

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her; she discourses, she carves, she gives the leer of invitation: I can construe the action of her familiar style; and the hardest voice of her behaviour, to be english'd rightly, is, *I am sir John Falstaff's.*

Pist. He hath study'd her will; and translated her will; out of honesty into English.

Fal. Now, the report goes, she has all the rule of her husband's purse; she hath a legion of angels.

Nym. The humour rises; it is good: humour me the angels.

Fal. I have writ me here a letter to her: and here another to Page's wife; who even now gave me good eyes too, examin'd my parts with most judicious eyliads: sometimes the beam of her view gilded my foot, sometimes my portly belly,—

Pist. Then did the sun on dunghill shine.

Nym. I thank thee for that humour.

Fal. O, she did so course-o'er my exteriors with such a greedy intention, that the appetite of her eye did seem to scorch me up like a burning-glass! She bears the purse too; she is a region in Guiana, all gold and bounty. I will be cheater to them both, and they shall be exchequers to me; they shall be my East and West Indies, and I will trade to them both. Go, bear thou this letter to mistress Page; and thou this to mistress Ford: we will thrive, lads, we will thrive.

Pist. Shall I sir Pandarus of Troy become,
And by my side wear steel? then, Lucifer take all.

Nym. I will run no base humour: here, take the humour letter; I will keep the 'haviour of reputation.

Fal. Hold, sirrah, bear you these letters tightly;
Sail like my pinnace to these golden shores.
[*Exit* ROBIN.
Rogues, hence, avaunt! vanish like hail-stones, go;
Trudge, plod, away, o' the hoof; seek shelter, pack!
Falstaff will learn the humour of this age,
French thrift, you rogues: myself, and skirted page.
[*Exit* FALSTAFF.

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Nym. I have operations in my head, which be humours of revenge.

Pist. Wilt thou revenge?

Nym. By welkin, and her star!

Pist. With wit, or steel?

Nym. With both the humours, I:
I will discuss the humour of this love to Page.

Pist. And I to Ford shall eke unfold,
How Falstaff, varlet vile,
His dove will prove, his gold will hold,
And his soft couch defile.

[*Exeunt.*

SCENE IV.

Dr. Caius' House.

Enter Mrs. QUICKLY, *with a letter, and* SIMPLE.

Quick. What; John Rugby!—

Enter RUGBY.

I pray thee, go to the casement, and see if you can see my master, master Doctor Caius, coming: if he do, i'faith, and find any body in the house, here will be an old abusing of the king's English.

Rug. I'll go watch.

Quick. Go; and we'll have a posset for't soon at night, in faith, at the latter end of a sea-coal fire.

[*Exit* RUGBY.

An honest, willing, kind fellow, as ever servant shall come in house withal; and, I warrant you, no tell-tale, nor no breed-bate: his worst fault is, that he is given to prayer; he is something peevish that way; but no body but has his fault;—but let that pass. Peter Simple you say your name is?

Sim. Ay, for fault of a better.

Quick. And master Slender's your master?

Sim. Ay, forsooth.

Quick. A softly-sprighted man, is he not?

Sim. Ay, forsooth; but he is as tall a man of his hands, as any is between this and his head; he hath fought with a warrener.

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Quick. How say you?——O, I should remember him: Does he not hold up his head, as it were? and strut in his gait?

Sim. Yes, indeed, does he.

Quick. Well, heaven send Anne Page no worse fortune! Tell master parson Evans, I will do what I can for your master: Anne is a good girl, and I wish—

Enter RUGBY.

Rug. Out, alas! here comes my master.

[*Exit* RUGBY.

Quick. We shall all be shent: Run in here, good young man; go into this closet.

[*Shuts* SIMPLE *in the closet.*

He will not stay long.—What, John Rugby! John, what, John, I say!—Go, John, go inquire for my master; I doubt, he be not well, that he comes not home:—*and down, down, a-down-a, &c. (Singing.)*

Enter Doctor CAIUS.

Caius. Vat is you sing? I do not like dese toys; Pray you, go and vetch me in my closet *un botier verd*; a box, a green-a box; Do intend vat I speak? a green-a box.

Quick. Ay, forsooth, I'll fetch it you.—
I am glad he went not in himself: if he had found the young man, he would have been horn-mad.

[*Exit Mrs.* QUICKLY.

Caius. *Fe, fe, fe, fe! ma foi, il fait fort chaud. Je m'en vais à la Cour,——la grande affaire.*

Enter Mrs. QUICKLY, *with a green box.*

Quick. Is it this, Sir?

Caius. Ouy; mettez le au mon pocket; *Depéchez,* quickly;—Vere is dat knave Rugby?

Quick. What, John Rugby! John!

Enter RUGBY.

Rug. Here, sir.

Caius. You are John Rugby, and you are Jack

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Rugby: Come, take-a your rapier, and come after my heel to de court.

Rug. 'T is ready, sir, here in the porch.

Caius. By my trot, I tarry too long:——Od's me! *Qu'ay j'oublié?* dere is some simples in my closet, dat I vill not, for the varld, I shall leave behind.

[*Exit* CAIUS.

Quick. Ah me! he 'll find the young man there, and be mad.

Caius. (within.) O diable, diable! vàt is in my closet?—Villainy, *Larron!* Rugby, my rapier.

Enter CAIUS, *pulling* SIMPLE *out of the Closet.*

Quick. Good master, be content.

Caius. Verefore shall I be content-a?

Quick. The young man is an honest man.

Caius. Vàt shall de honest man do in my closet? dere is no honest man dat shall come in my closet.

Quick. I beseech you, be not so flegmatic; hear the truth of it. He came of an errand to me from parson Hugh.

Caius. Vell.

Sim. Ay, forsooth, to desire her to——

Quick. Peace, I pray you.

Caius. Peace-a your tongue:—Speak-a your tale.

Sim. To desire this honest gentlewoman, your maid, to speak a good word to mistress Anne Page for my master in the way of marriage.

Quick. This is all, indeed-la; but I 'll never put my finger in the fire, and need not.

Caius. Sir Hugh send-a you?—Rugby, *baillez* me some paper: Tarry you a little while.

[*Exeunt* CAIUS *and* RUGBY.

Quick. I am glad he is so quiet; if he had been thoroughly mov'd, you should have heard him so loud and so melancholy;—But notwithstanding, man, I 'll do your master what good I can: and the very yea and the no is, the French Doctor, my master,—I may call him my master, look you, for I keep his house;

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and I wash, wring, brew, bake, scour, dress meat and drink, make the beds, and do all myself.

Sim. 'T is a great charge, to come under one body's hand.

Quick. Are you avis'd o' that? you shall find it a great charge: And to be up early, and down late;—but notwithstanding, (to tell you in your ear; I would have no words of it;) my master himself is in love with mistress Anne Page: but, notwithstanding that,—I know Anne's mind,—that's neither here nor there.

Enter CAIUS *and* RUGBY.

Caius. You jack'napes; give-a dis letter to sir Hugh: by gar, it is a shallenge: I vill cut his throat in de park; and I vill teach a scurvy jack-a-nape priest to meddle or make:——you may be gone; it is not good you tarry here.

[*Exit* SIMPLE.

Quick. Alas, he speaks but for his friend.

Caius. It is no matter-a for dat:——do you not tell-a me dat I shall have Anne Page for myself?—By gar, I vill kill de jack priest: and I vill appoint mine host of *de Jarterre* to measure our weapon;—by gar, I vill myself have Anne Page.

Quick. Sir, the maid loves you, and all shall be well: we must give folks leave to prate.

Caius. Rugby, come to the court vit me.——By gar, if I have not Anne Page, I shall turn your head out of door:—Follow my heels, Rugby.

[*Exeunt* CAIUS *and* RUGBY.

Quick. You shall have An fools-head of your own. No, I know Anne's mind for that; never a woman in Windsor knows more of Anne's mind than I do; nor can do more than I can do with her, I thank heaven.

Fent. (within.) Who 's within there, ho?

Quick. Who 's there, I trow?

Enter FENTON.

Fent. How now, good woman; how dost thou?

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Quick. The better, that it pleases your good worship to ask.

Fent. What news? how does pretty mistress Anne?

Quick. In truth, sir, and she is pretty, and honest, and gentle; and one that is your friend, I can tell you that by the way; I praise heaven for it.

Fent. Shall I do any good, thinkest thou? shall I not lose my suit?

Quick. Troth, sir, all is in his hands above: but notwithstanding, master Fenton, I 'll be sworn on a book, she loves you.——Have not your worship a wart above your eye?

Fent. Yes, marry, have I; what of that?

Quick. Well, thereby hangs a tale;——good faith, it is such another Nan;—but, I detest, an honest maid as ever broke bread:—We had an hour's talk of that wart;—I shall never laugh but in that maid's company!—But, indeed, she is given too much to allicholly and musing: But for you—Well—go to.

Fent. Well, I shall see her to-day: Hold, there's money for thee; let me have thy voice in my behalf: if thou seest her before me, commend me—

Quick. Will I? ay, i' faith, that we will, and I will tell your worship more of the wart, the next time we have confidence; and of other wooers.

Fent. Well, farewell; I am in great haste now.

[*Exit* FENTON.

Quick. Farewell to your worship.—Truly, an honest gentleman; but Anne loves him not; I know Anne's mind as well as another does:—Out upon 't! what have I forgot?

[*Exit.*

END OF ACT I.

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ACT II.

SCENE I.

Before Page's House.

Enter Mrs. PAGE, *reading a letter.*

Mrs. Page. WHAT, have I 'scap'd love-letters in the holyday-time of my beauty, and am I now a subject for them? Let me see:

(Reads.) Ask me no reason why I love you; for, though love use reason for his precisian, he admits him not for his counsellor: You are not young, no more am I; go to then, there's sympathy: you are merry, so am I; Ha! ha! then there's more sympathy: you love sack, and so do I: Would you desire better sympathy? Let it suffice thee, mistress Page, (at the least, if the love of a soldier can suffice,) that I love thee: I will not say, pity me! 'tis not a soldier-like phrase; but I say, love me. By me,

Thine own true knight,
By day or night,
Or any kind of light,
With all his might,
For thee to fight. John Falstaff.

What a Herod of Jewry is this!—O wicked, wicked world!—What one unweigh'd behaviour has this Flemish drunkard pick'd out of my conversation, that he dares in this manner assay me? Why, he hath not been thrice in my company!—How shall I be reveng'd on him? for reveng'd I will be, as sure as—

Enter Mrs. FORD.

Mrs. Ford. Mrs. Page! trust me, I was going to your house.

Mrs. Page. And, trust me, I was coming to you. You look very ill.

Mrs. Ford. Nay, I'll ne'er believe that; I have to show to the contrary.

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Mrs. Page. 'Faith, but you do, in my mind.

Mrs. Ford. Well, I do then; yet, I say, I could show you to the contrary: O, mistress Page, give me some counsel!

Mrs. Page. What 's the matter, woman?

Mrs. Ford. O woman, if it were not for one trifling respect, I could come to such honour!

Mrs. Page. Hang the trifle, woman; take the honour: What is it?—dispense with trifles;—what is it?

Mrs. Ford. I could be knighted.

Mrs. Page. What?—thou liest!

Mrs. Ford. We burn day-light:—here, read, read;—perceive how I might be knighted.—I shall think the worse of fat men, as long as I have an eye to make difference of men's liking: And yet he would not swear; prais'd women's modesty; and gave such orderly and well-behaved reproof to all uncomeliness, that I would have sworn his disposition would have gone to the truth of his words; but they do no more adhere, and keep place together, than the hundredth psalm to the tune of *Green Sleeves*. What tempest, I trow, threw this whale, with so many tuns of oil in his belly, ashore at Windsor? How shall I be reveng'd on him?—Did you ever hear the like?

Mrs. Page. Letter for letter; but that the name of Page and Ford differs!—To thy great comfort in this mystery of ill opinions, here 's the twin-brother of thy letter: but let thine inherit first; for, I protest, mine never shall. I warrant, he hath a thousand of these letters, writ with blank space for different names.

Mrs. Ford. Why, this is the very same: the very hand, the very words: What doth he think of us?

Mrs. Page. Nay, I know not: It makes me almost ready to wrangle with mine own honesty. I 'll entertain myself like one that I am not acquainted withal; for, sure, unless he knew some strain in me, that I know not myself, he would never have boarded me in this fury.

Mrs. Ford. Boarding, call you it?

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Mrs. Page. Let's be reveng'd on him: let's appoint him a meeting; give him a show of comfort in his suit; and lead him on with a fine baited delay, till he hath pawn'd his horses to mine host of the Garter.

Mrs. Ford. Nay, I will consent to act any villainy against him, that may not sully the chariness of our honesty. Oh, that my husband saw this letter! it would give eternal food to his jealousy.

Mrs. Page. Why, look, where he comes; and my good man too: he's as far from jealousy, as I am from giving him cause.

Mrs. Ford. You are the happier woman.

Mrs. Page. Let's consult together against this greasy knight:—Look, who comes yonder.

Mrs. Ford. Mrs. Quickly.

Mrs. Page. She shall be our messenger to this paltry knight.

Mrs. Ford. Trust me, I thought on her; she'll fit it.

[*Exeunt.*

Enter FORD, *with* PISTOL, *and* PAGE, *with* NYM.

Ford. Well, I hope, it be not so.

Pist. Hope is a curtail-dog in some affairs:
Sir John affects thy wife:
He loves thy gally-mawfry; Ford, perpend.

Ford. Love my wife?

Pist. With liver burning hot: Prevent, or go thou,
Like sir Actæon he, with Ring-wood at thy heels:—
O, odious is the name.

Ford. What name, sir?

Pist. The horn, I say: Farewell.
Take heed; have open eye; for thieves do foot by night:
Take heed, ere summer comes, or cuckoo-birds do sing.—
Away, sir corporal Nym,——
Believe it, Page, he speaks.

[*Exit* PISTOL.

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Ford. I will be patient; I will find out this.

Nym. And this is true: I like not the humour of lying. He loves your wife; there's the short and the long. My name is corporal Nym; I speak, and I avouch. 'T is true:—my name is Nym, and Falstaff loves your wife.—Adieu! I love not the humour of bread and cheese; and there's the humour of it. Adieu.

[*Exit* NYM.

Page. *The humour of it*, quoth a'! here's a fellow frights humour out of its wits.

Ford. I will seek out Falstaff.—If I do find it, well.

Page. I will not believe such a Cataian, though the priest o' the town commended him for a true man.

Ford. 'T was a good sensible fellow: Well.

Page. How now, master Ford?

Ford. You heard what this knave told me: did you not?

Page. Yes; and you heard what the other told me.

Ford. Do you think there is truth in them?

Page. Hang 'em, slaves! I do not think the knight would offer it: but these, that accuse him in his intent towards our wives, are a yoke of his discarded men.

Ford. Were they his men?

Page. Marry, were they.

Ford. I like it never the better for that.—Does he lie at the Garter?

Page. Ay, marry, does he. If he should intend his voyage towards my wife, I would turn her loose to him; and what he gets more of her than sharp words, let it lie on my head.

Ford. I do not misdoubt my wife; but I would be loth to turn them together: A man may be too confident: I would have nothing lie on my head.—I cannot be thus satisfied.

Page. Look, where my ranting host of the Garter comes: there is either liquor in his pate, or money in his purse, when he looks so merrily.

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Enter Host.

How now, mine host?

Host. How now, bully-rook? thou 'rt a gentleman: cavalero justice, I say.

Enter SHALLOW.

Shal. I follow, mine host, I follow.—Good even, and twenty, good master Page! Master Page, will you go with us? we have sport in hand.

Host. Tell him, cavalero justice; tell him, bully-rook.

Shal. Sir, there is a fray to be fought, between sir Hugh the Welch priest, and Caius the French doctor.

Ford. Good mine host o' the Garter, a word with you.

Host. What say'st thou, bully-rook?

Shal. Will you go with us to behold it? My merry host hath had the measuring of their weapons; and, I think, he hath appointed them contrary places: for, believe me, I hear, the parson is no jester. Hark, I will tell you what our sport shall be.

Host. Hast thou no suit against my knight, my guest-cavalier?

Ford. None, I protest; but I 'll give you a pottle of burnt sack to give me recourse to him, and tell him, my name is Brook, only for a jest.

Host. My hand, bully: thou shalt have egress and regress; said I well? and thy name shall be Brook: It is a merry knight.—Will you go an-heirs?

[*Exit Host.*

Shal. Have with you, mine host.

Page. I have heard, the Frenchman hath good skill in his rapier.

Shal. Tut, sir, I could have told you more: In these times you stand on distance, your passes, stoccados, and I know not what: 't is the heart, master Page; 't is here, 't is here. I have seen the time, with my long sword, I would have made you four tall fellows skip like rats.

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Enter Host.

Host. Here, boys, here, here! shall we wag?

Page. Have with you:—I had rather hear them scold than fight.

[*Exeunt Host*, SHALLOW, *and* PAGE.

Ford. Though Page be a secure fool, and stand so firmly on his wife's frailty, yet I cannot put off my opinion so easily: She was in his company at Page's house; and, what they made there, I know not. Well, I will look further into 't: and I have a disguise to sound Falstaff: If I find her honest, I lose not my labour; if she be otherwise, 't is labour well bestow'd.

[*Exit.*

SCENE II.

The Garter Inn.

Enter FALSTAFF, *and* PISTOL.

Fal. I will not lend thee a penny.

Pist. Why, then the world's mine oyster, which I with sword will open.—I will retort the sum in equipage.

Fal. Not a penny. I have been content, sir, you should lay my countenance to pawn: I have grated upon my good friends for three reprieves for you and your coach-fellow, Nym; or else you had look'd through the grate, like a geminy of baboons. I am damn'd, for swearing to gentlemen my friends, you were good soldiers, and tall fellows: and when mistress Bridget lost the handle of her fan, I took 't upon mine honour, thou hadst it not.

Pist. Didst thou not share? hadst thou not fifteen pence?

Fal. Reason, you rogue, reason: Think'st thou I'll endanger my soul *gratis?* At a word, hang no more about me, I am no gibbet for you:—go.—You 'll not bear a letter for me, you rogue!—you stand upon your

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honour!—Why, thou unconfinable baseness, it is as much as I can do, to keep the terms of my honour precise. I, I, I myself sometimes, leaving the fear of heaven on the left hand, and hiding mine honour in my necessity, am fain to shuffle, to hedge, and to lurch; and yet you, rogue, will ensconce your rags, your cat-a-mountain looks, your red-lattice phrases, and your bold-beating oaths, under the shelter of your honour! You will not do it, you?

Pist. I do relent: What wouldst thou more of man?

Enter ROBIN.

Rob. Sir, here's a woman would speak with you.

Fal. Let her approach.

[*Exit* ROBIN.

Hence, rogue, avaunt,—go steal, and hang.

[*Exit* PISTOL.

Enter Mistress QUICKLY.

Quick. Give your worship good-morrow.

Fal. Good-morrow, good wife.

Quick. Not so, an 't please your worship.

Fal. Good maid, then.

Quick. I'll be sworn; as my mother was, the first hour I was born.

Fal. I do believe the swearer: What with me?

Quick. Shall I vouchsafe your worship a word or two?

Fal. Two thousand, fair woman; and I 'll vouchsafe thee the hearing.

Quick. There is one mistress Ford, sir;—I pray, come a little nearer this ways:—I myself dwell with master doctor Caius.

Fal. Well, on: Mistress Ford, you say,——

Quick. Your worship says very true: I pray your worship, come a little nearer this ways.

Fal. I warrant thee, nobody hears:—Well: mistress Ford;——what of her?

Quick. Why, sir, she's a good creature. Lord, lord! your worship's a wanton: Well, heaven forgive you, and all of us, I pray!

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Fal. Mistress Ford;—come, mistress Ford,——

Quick. Marry, this is the short and the long of it; you have brought her into such a canaries, as 't is wonderful. The best courtier of them all, when the court lay at Windsor, could never have brought her to such a canary. Yet there has been knights, and lords, and gentlemen, with their coaches; I warrant you, coach after coach, letter after letter, gift after gift: smelling so sweetly, (all musk) and so rusling, I warrant you, in silk and gold; and in such alligant terms, that would have won any woman's heart; and, I warrant you, they could never get an eye-wink of her.

Fal. But what says she to me? be brief, my good she Mercury.

Quick. Marry, she hath receiv'd your letter; for the which she thanks you a thousand times; and she gives you to notify, that her husband will be absence from his house between ten and eleven.

Fal. Ten and eleven?

Quick. Ay, forsooth; and then you may come and see the picture, she says, that you wot of;—master Ford, her husband, will be from home. Alas! the sweet woman leads an ill life with him; he's a very jealousy man; she leads a very frampold life with him, good heart.

Fal. Ten and eleven: Woman, commend me to her; I will not fail her.

Quick. Why you say well: But I have another messenger to your worship: Mistress Page has her hearty commendations to you too;—and, let me tell you in your ear, she's as fartuous a civil modest wife, and one, I tell you, that will not miss you morning nor evening prayer, as any is in Windsor, whoe'er be the other: and she bade me tell your worship, that her husband is seldom from home; but, she hopes, there will come a time. I never knew a woman so dote upon a man; surely, I think you have charms, la; yes, in truth.

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Fal. Not I, I assure thee; setting the attraction of my good parts aside, I have no other charms.

Quick. Blessing on your heart for 't!

Fal. But, I pray thee, tell me this: has Ford's wife, and Page's wife, acquainted each other how they love me?

Quick. That were a jest, indeed!—they have not so little grace, I hope:—that were a trick, indeed! But mistress Page would desire you to send her your little page, of all loves; her husband has a marvellous infection to the little page: and, truly, master Page is an honest man. Never a wife in Windsor leads a better life than she does; do what she will, say what she will, take all, pay all, go to bed when she list, rise when she list, all is as she will; and, truly, she deserves it; for if there be a kind woman in Windsor, she is one. You must send her your page; no remedy.

Fal. Why, I will.

Quick. Nay, but do so then: and, look you, he may come and go between you both; and, in any case, have a nay-word, that you may know one another's mind, and the boy never need to understand any thing; for 't is not good that children should know any wickedness: old folks, you know, have discretion, as they say, and know the world.

Fal. Fare thee well: commend me to them both: there 's my purse; I am yet thy debtor.—Boy,——

Enter ROBIN.

go along with this woman.—

[*Exeunt Mrs.* QUICKLY, *and* ROBIN.

This news distracts me.—Say'st thou so, old Jack? go thy ways; I 'll make more of thy old body than I have done. Will they yet look after thee? Wilt thou, after the expense of so much money, be now a gainer? Good body, I thank thee: Let them say, 't is grossly done; so it be fairly done, no matter.

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Enter BARDOLPH, *with a cup of sack.*

Bard. Sir John, there 's one master Brook below would fain speak with you, and be acquainted with you; and hath sent your worship a morning's draught of sack.

Fal. Brook, is his name?

Bard. Ay, sir.

Fal. Call him in.

[*Exit* BARDOLPH.

Such Brooks are welcome to me, that o'erflow such liquor.—Ah! ha! mistress Ford and mistress Page, have I encompass'd you? go to; *via!*

Enter BARDOLPH, *and* FORD *disguised.*

Ford. Bless you, sir.

Fal. And you, sir: Would you speak with me?

Ford. I make bold, to press with so little preparation upon you,——

Fal. You 're welcome; What 's your will? Give us leave, drawer.

[*Exit* BARDOLPH.

Ford. Sir, I am a gentleman that have spent much; my name is Brook.

Fal. Good master Brook, I desire more acquaintance of you.

Ford. Good sir John, I sue for yours: not to charge you; for I must let you understand, I think myself in better plight for a lender than you are; the which hath something embolden'd me to this unseason'd intrusion; for, they say, if money go before, all ways do lie open.

Fal. Money is a good soldier, sir, and will on.

Ford. Troth, and I have a bag of money here troubles me: if you will help me to bear it, sir John, take all, or half, for easing me of the carriage.

Fal. Sir, I know not how I may deserve to be your porter.

Ford. I will tell you, sir, if you will give me the hearing.

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Fal. Speak, good master Brook; I shall be glad to be your servant.

Ford. Sir, I will be brief with you:—You have been a man long known to me, though I had never so good means, as desire, to make myself acquainted with you. I shall discover a thing to you, wherein I must very much lay open mine own imperfection: but, good sir John, as you have one eye upon my follies, as you hear them unfolded, turn another into the register of your own; that I may pass with a reproof the easier, sith you yourself know, how easy it is, to be such an offender.

Fal. Very well, sir; proceed.

Ford. There is a gentlewoman in this town, her husband's name is Ford.

Fal. Well, sir.

Ford. I have long lov'd her, and, I protest to you, bestow'd much on her; follow'd her with a doting observance; fee'd every slight occasion, that could but niggardly give me sight of her; briefly, I have pursued her, as love hath pursued me; which hath been on the wing of all occasions. But, whatsoever I have merited, either in my mind, or in my means, meed, I am sure, I have receiv'd none; unless experience be a jewel; that I have purchas'd at an infinite rate; and that hath taught me to say this:

Love like a shadow flies, when substance love pursues;
Pursuing that that flies, and flying what pursues.

Fal. Have you receiv'd no promise of satisfaction at her hands?

Ford. Never.

Fal. Have you importun'd her to such a purpose?

Ford. Never.

Fal. Of what quality was your love then?

Ford. Like a fair house, built upon another man's ground; so that I have lost my edifice, by mistaking the place where I erected it.

Fal. To what purpose have you unfolded this to me?

Ford. When I have told you that, I have told you

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all.—Some say, that, though she appear honest to me, yet, in other places, she enlargeth her mirth so far, that there is shrewd construction made of her. Now, sir John, here is the heart of my purpose: You are a gentleman of excellent breeding, admirable discourse, of great admittance, authentic in your place and person, generally allow'd for your many war-like, court-like, and learned preparations.

Fal. O sir!

Ford. Believe it, for you know it:—There is money; spend it, spend it: spend more; spend all I have; only give me so much of your time in exchange of it, as to lay an amiable siege to the honesty of this Ford's wife: use your art of wooing, win her to consent to you; if any man may, you may as soon as any.

Fal. Would it apply well to the vehemence of your affection, that I should win what you would enjoy? methinks, you prescribe to yourself very preposterously.

Ford. O, understand my drift: She dwells so securely on the excellency of her honour, that the folly of my soul dares not present itself; she is too bright to be look'd against. Now, could I come to her with any detection in my hand, my desires had instance and argument to commend themselves: I could drive her then from the ward of her purity, her reputation, her marriage vow, and a thousand other her defences, which now are too strongly embattled against me: What say you to 't, sir John?

Fal. Master Brook, I will first make bold with your money; next, give me your hand; and last, as I am a gentleman, you shall, if you will, enjoy Ford's wife.

Ford. O good sir!

Fal. Master Brook, I say, you shall.

Ford. Want no money, sir John, you shall want none.

Fal. Want no mistress Ford, master Brook, you shall want none.—I shall be with her (I may tell you) by her own appointment; even as you came in to me, her assistant, or go-between, parted from me: I say,

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I shall be with her between ten and eleven; for at that time the jealous rascally knave her husband will be forth. Come you to me at night; you shall know how I speed.

Ford. I am bless'd in your acquaintance.—Do you know Ford, sir?

Fal. Hang him, poor cuckoldly knave! I know him not:—yet I wrong him to call him poor; they say, the jealous wittolly knave hath masses of money: for the which, his wife seems to me well-favour'd. I will use her as the key of the cuckoldly rogue's coffer; and there's my harvest-home.

Ford. I would you knew Ford, sir; that you might avoid him, if you saw him.

Fal. Hang him, mechanical salt-butter rogue! I will stare him out of his wits; I will awe him with my cudgel; it shall hang like a meteor o'er the cuckold's horns: master Brook, thou shalt know, I will predominate over the peasant, and thou shalt sleep with his wife.—Come to me soon at night:—Ford's a knave, and I will aggravate his style; thou, master Brook, shalt know him for knave and cuckold:—come to me soon at night.

[*Exit* FALSTAFF.

Ford. What a damn'd Epicurean rascal is this!—My heart is ready to crack with impatience.—Who says, this is improvident jealousy? my wife hath sent to him, the hour is fix'd, the match is made. Would any man have thought this?—See the hell of having a false woman! my bed shall be abus'd, my coffers ransack'd, my reputation gnawn at; and I shall not only receive this villainous wrong, but stand under the adoption of abominable terms, and by him that does me this wrong. Terms! names!—Amaimon sounds well; Lucifer, well; Barbason, well: yet they are devil's additions, the names of fiends: but cuckold! wittol-cuckold! the devil himself hath not such a name.—Page is an ass, a secure ass; he will trust his wife, he will not be jealous: I will rather trust parson Hugh the Welchman with my cheese, or a

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thief to walk my ambling gelding, than my wife with herself: then she plots, then she ruminates, then she devises; and what they think in their hearts they may effect, they will break their hearts but they will effect. —Heaven be prais'd for my jealousy!—Ten o'clock the hour;—I will prevent this, detect my wife, be reveng'd on Falstaff, and laugh at Page. I will about it;—better three hours too soon, than a minute too late.—Fie, fie, fie! cuckold! cuckold! cuckold!

[*Exit.*

SCENE III.

Windsor Park.

Enter CAIUS, *and* RUGBY.

Caius. Jack Rugby!

Rug. Sir.

Caius. Vat is de clock, Jack?

Rug. 'T is past the hour, sir, that sir Hugh promis'd to meet.

Caius. By gar, he has save his soul, dat he is no come; he has pray his Pible vell, dat he is no come: by gar, Jack Rugby, he is dead already, if he be come.

Rug. He is wise, sir; he knew, your worship would kill him.

Caius. By gar, de herring is no dead, so as I vill kill him. Take your rapier, Jack; I vill tell you how I vill kill him.

Rug. Alas, sir, I cannot fence.

Caius. Villain-a, take your rapier.

Rug. Forbear; here 's company.

Enter Host, SHALLOW, PAGE, *and* SLENDER.

Host. 'Bless thee, bully doctor.

Shal. 'Save you, master doctor Caius.

Page. Now, good master doctor!

Slen. Give you good-morrow, sir.

Caius. Vat be all you, one, two, tree, four, come for?

Host. To see thee fight, to see thee foin, to see thee

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traverse; to see thee here, to see thee there; to see thee pass thy punto, thy stock, thy reverse, thy distance, thy montant. Is he dead, my Ethiopian? is he dead, my Francisco? ha, bully! What says my Æsculapius? my Galen? my heart of elder? ha! is he dead, bully Stale? is he dead?

Caius. By gar he is de coward of the vorld; he is not show his face.

Host. Thou art a Castilian king, Urinal! Hector of Greece, my boy!

Caius. I pray you, bear vitness that me have stay six or seven, two, tree hours for him, and he is no come.

Shal. He is the wiser man, master doctor: he is a curer of souls, and you a curer of bodies; if you should fight, you go against the hair of your professions: is it not true, master Page?

Page. Master Shallow, you have yourself been a great fighter, though now a man of peace.

Shal. Body-kins, master Page, though I now be old, and of the peace, if I see a sword out, my finger itches to make one: though we are justices, and doctors, and churchmen, master Page, we have some salt of our youth in us; we are the sons of women, master Page.

Page. 'T is true, master Shallow.

Shal. It will be found so, master Page. Master doctor Caius, I am come to fetch you home. I am sworn of the peace: you have show'd yourself a wise physician, and sir Hugh hath shown himself a wise and patient churchman: you must go with me, master doctor.

Host. Pardon, guest justice:—A word, monsieur mock-water.

Caius. Mock-vater! vat is dat?

Host. Mock-water, in our English tongue, is valour, bully.

Caius. By gar, then I have as much mock-vater as de Englishman:—Scurvy-jack-dog! by gar, me vill cut his ears.

Host. He will clapper-claw thee tightly, bully.

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Caius. Clapper-de-law! vat is dat?

Host. That is, he will make thee amends.

Caius. By gar, me do look, he shall clapper-de-claw me; for, by gar, me vill have it.

Host. And I will provoke him to 't, or let him wag.

Caius. Me tank you for dat.

Host. And moreover, bully,—But first, master guest and master Page, and eke cavalero Slender, go you through the town to Frogmore. [*Aside to them.*

Page. Sir Hugh is there, is he?

Host. He is there: see what humour he is in; and I will bring the doctor about the fields: will it do well?

Shal. We will do it.

All. Adieu, good master doctor.

[*Exeunt* PAGE, SHALLOW, *and* SLENDER.

Caius. By gar, me vill kill de Welchman; for he speak for a jack-an-ape to Anne Page.

Host. Let him die: but, first, sheathe thy impatience; throw cold water on thy choler: go about the fields with me through Frogmore; I will bring thee where mistress Anne Page is, at a farm-house a feasting; and thou shalt woo her: said I well?

Caius. By gar, me tank you for dat: by gar, I love you; and I shall procure-a you de good guest, de earl, de knight, de lords, de gentlemen, my patients.

Host. For the which, I will be thy adversary toward Anne Page; said I well?

Caius. By gar, 't is good: vell said.

Host. Let us wag then.

Caius. Come at my heels, Jack Rugby.

[*Exeunt.*

END OF ACT II.

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ACT III.

SCENE I.

Frogmore.

Enter EVANS, *with a book in his hand, and* SIMPLE.

Eva. I PRAY you now, good master Slender's serving-man, and friend Simple by your name, which way have you look'd for master Caius, that calls himself *Doctor of Physick?*

Simp. Marry, sir, the Pitty-ward, the Park-ward, every way; old Windsor way, and every way but the town way.

Eva. I most fehemently desire you, you will also look that way.

Simp. I will, sir.

[*Exit* SIMPLE.

Eva. 'Pless my soul! how full of cholers I am, and trempling of mind!—I shall be glad, if he have deceiv'd me: how melancholies I am!—I will knog his urinals about his knave's costard, when I have good opportunities for the 'ork:—'pless my soul!

[Sings.] *By shallow rivers, to whose falls*
Melodious birds sing madrigals;
There will we make our peds of roses,
And a thousand vragrant posies.
By shallow——

Mercy on me! I have a great dispositions to cry.

[Sings.] *Melodious birds sing madrigals;*—

Enter SIMPLE.

Simp. Yonder he is, coming this way, sir Hugh.

Eva. He 's welcome:——

[Sings.] *By shallow rivers, to whose falls*——

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Heaven prosper the right!—What weapons is he?

Simp. No weapons, sir:—There comes my master, master Shallow, and another gentleman from Frogmore, over the stile, this way.

Eva. 'Pray you, give me my gown;—or else keep it in your arms.

Enter PAGE, SHALLOW, *and* SLENDER.

Shal. How now, master parson? Good-morrow, good sir Hugh. Keep a gamester from the dice, and a good student from his book, and it is wonderful.

Slen. Ah, sweet Anne Page!

Page. 'Save you, good sir Hugh!

Eva. 'Pless you from his mercy sake, all of you!

Shal. What! the sword and the word! do you study them both, master parson?

Page. And youthful still, in your doublet and hose, this raw rheumatick day?

Eva. There is reasons and causes for it.

Page. We are come to you, to do a good office, master parson.

Eva. Fery well: What is it?

Page. Yonder is a most reverend gentleman, who, belike having receiv'd wrong by some person, is at most odds with his own gravity and patience, that ever you saw.

Shal. I have liv'd fourscore years, and upward; I never heard a man of his place, gravity, and learning, so wide of his own respect.

Eva. What is he?

Page. I think you know him; master doctor Caius, the renown'd French physician.

Eva. Heaven's will, and his passion o' my heart! I had as lief you would tell me of a mess of porridge.

Page. Why?

Eva. He has no more knowledge in Hibocrates and Galen,—and he is a knave besides; a cowardly knave, as you would desire to be acquainted withal.

Page. I warrant you, he 's the man should fight with him.

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Slen. O, sweet Anne Page!

Shal. It appears so, by his weapons:—Keep them asunder;—here comes Dr. Caius.

Enter Host, CAIUS, *and* RUGBY.

Page. Nay, good master parson, keep in your weapon.

Shal. So do you, good master doctor.

Host. Disarm them, and let them question; let them keep their limbs whole, and hack our English.

Caius. I pray you, let-a me speak a word vit your ear: Verefore vill you not meet-a me?

Eva. 'Pray you, use your patience: in good time.

Caius. By gar, you are de coward, de Jack dog, John ape.

Eva. 'Pray you, let us not be laughing-stogs to other men's humours; I desire you in friendship, and will one way or other make you amends:—I will knog your urinals about your knave's cogs-combs, for missing your meetings and appointments.

Caius. Diable!—Jack Rugby,—mine *Host de Jarterre,*—have I not stay for him, to kill him? have I not, at de place I did appoint?

Eva. As I am a christians soul, now, look you, this is the place appointed; I'll be judgement by mine host of the Garter.

Host. Peace, I say, Gallia and Gaul, French and Welch, soul-curer and body-curer.

Caius. Ay, dat is very good! excellent!

Host. Peace, I say; hear mine host of the Garter. Am I politick? am I subtle? am I a Machiavel? Shall I lose my doctor? no; he gives me the potions, and the motions. Shall I lose my parson? my priest? my sir Hugh? no; he gives me the pro-verbs and the no-verbs.—Give me thy hand, terrestrial; so:—Give me thy hand, celestial: so.—Boys of art. I have deceiv'd you both; I have directed you to wrong places: your hearts are mighty, your skins are whole, and let burnt sack be the issue.——Come, lay their swords

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to pawn:—Follow me, lad of peace; follow, follow, follow.

Shal. Trust me, a mad host.—Follow, gentlemen, follow.

Slen. O, sweet Anne Page!

[*Exeunt Host*, SHALLOW, SLENDER, PAGE, *and* SIMPLE.

Caius. Ha! do I perceive dat? have you make-a de sot of us? ha, ha!

Eva. This is well; he has made us his vlouting-stog.—I desire you, that we may be friends; and let us knog our prains together, to be revenge on this same scald, scurvy, cogging companion, the host of the Garter.

Caius. By gar, vit all my heart; he promise to bring me vere is Anne Page: by gar, he deceive me too.

Eva. Well, I will smite his noddles:—'Pray you follow.

[*Exeunt.*

SCENE II.

A Street.

Enter ROBIN, *and Mrs.* PAGE.

Mrs. Page. Nay, keep your way, little gallant; you were wont to be a follower, but now you are a leader: Whether had you rather, lead mine eyes, or eye your master's heels?

Rob. I had rather, forsooth, go before you like a man, than follow him like a dwarf.

Mrs. Page. O, you are a flattering boy; now, I see, you 'll be a courtier.

Enter FORD.

Ford. Well met, mistress Page: Whither go you?

Mrs. Page. Truly, sir, to see your wife: Is she at home?

Ford. Ay; and as idle as she may hang together, for want of company: I think, if your husbands were dead, you two would marry.

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Mrs. Page. Be sure of that,—two other husbands.

Ford. Where had you this pretty weather-cock?

Mrs. Page. I cannot tell what the dickens his name is my husband had him of:—What do you call your knight's name, sirrah?

Rob. Sir John Falstaff.

Ford. Sir John Falstaff!

Mrs. Page. He, he; I can never hit on's name. There is such a league between my good man and he!—Is your wife at home, indeed?

Ford. Indeed, she is.

Mrs. Page. By your leave, sir;—I am sick, till I see her.

[*Exeunt Mrs.* PAGE, *and* ROBIN.

Ford. Has Page any brains? hath he any eyes? hath he any thinking? sure, they sleep; he hath no use of them. Why, this boy will carry a letter twenty miles, as easy as a cannon will shoot point-blank twelve score. He pieces out his wife's inclination; he gives her folly motion, and advantage; and now she's going to my wife, and Falstaff's boy with her. A man may hear this shower sing in the wind:—and Falstaff's boy with her!—Good plots!—they are laid; and our revolted wives share damnation together. Well; I will take him, then torture my wife; pluck the borrow'd veil of modesty from the so seeming mistress Page; divulge Page himself for a secure and wilful Actæon,—

[*The Clock strikes.*]

The clock gives me my cue, and my assurance bids me search; there I shall find Falstaff: I shall be rather prais'd for this, than mock'd; for it is as positive as the earth is firm, that Falstaff is there.—

Enter PAGE, SHALLOW, SLENDER, *Host*, EVANS, CAIUS, RUGBY, *and* SIMPLE.

Shal. Page, &c. Well met, master Ford.

Ford. Trust me, a good knot: I have good cheer at home; and, I pray you all, go with me.

Shal. I must excuse myself, master Ford.

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Slen. And so must I, sir; we have appointed to dine with mistress Anne, and I would not break with her, for more money than I 'll speak of.

Shal. We have linger'd about a match between Anne Page and my cousin Slender, and this day we shall have our answer.

Slen. I hope, I have your good-will, father Page.

Page. You have, master Slender; I stand wholly for you:—but my wife, master doctor, is for you altogether.

Caius. Ay, by gar; and de maid is love-a me; my nursh-a Quickly tell me so mush.

Host. What say you to young master Fenton? he capers, he dances, he has eyes of youth; he writes verses, he speaks holyday; he smells April and May: he will carry 't, he will carry 't; 't is in his buttons; he will carry 't.

Page. Not by my consent, I promise you. The gentleman is of no having: he kept company with the wild prince and Poins; he is of too high a region, he knows too much; my consent goes not that way.

Ford. I beseech you, heartily, some of you go home with me to dinner: besides your cheer, you shall have sport; I 'll show you a monster.—Master doctor, you shall go;—so shall you, master Page;—and you, sir Hugh.

Shal. Well, fare you well.—We shall have the freer wooing at master Page's.

[*Exeunt* SHALLOW, SLENDER, *and* SIMPLE.

Host. Farewell, my hearts: I will to my honest knight Falstaff, and drink canary with him.

[*Exit Host.*

Ford. I think, I shall drink in pipe-wine first with him; I 'll make him dance.—Will you go, gentles?

[*Exeunt* FORD, PAGE, *and* EVANS.

Caius. Go home, John Rugby; I come anon.

[*Exeunt* CAIUS, *and* RUGBY.

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SCENE III.

Ford's House.

Enter Mrs. FORD, *and Mrs.* PAGE.

Mrs. Ford. What, John! what, Robert!

Mrs. Page. Quickly, quickly:—is the buck-basket—

Mrs. Ford. I warrant:——What, Robin, I say.

Enter JOHN, *and* ROBERT, *with a basket.*

Mrs. Page. Come, come, come.

Mrs. Ford. Here, set it down.

Mrs. Page. Give your men the charge; we must be brief.

Mrs. Ford. Marry, as I told you before, John, and Robert, be ready here hard-by in the brew-house; and, when I suddenly call on you, come forth, and (without any pause, or staggering,) take this basket on your shoulders: that done, trudge with it in all haste, and carry it among the whitsters in Datchet-mead, and there empty it in the muddy ditch, close by the Thames' side.

Mrs. Page. You will do it?

Mrs. Ford. I have told them over and over; they lack no direction: Be gone, and come when you are call'd.

[*Exeunt* JOHN, *and* ROBERT.

Mrs. Page. Here comes little Robin.

Enter ROBIN.

Mrs. Ford. How now, my eyas-musket? what news with you?

Rob. My master sir John is come in at the back-door, mistress Ford; and requests your company.

Mrs. Page. You little Jack-a-lent, have you been true to us?

Rob. Ay, I 'll be sworn: My master knows not of your being here; and hath threaten'd to put me into everlasting liberty, if I tell you of it; for, he swears, he 'll turn me away.

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Mrs. Page. Thou 'rt a good boy; this secrecy of thine shall be a tailor to thee, and shall make thee a new doublet and hose.—I 'll go hide me.

Mrs. Ford. Do so:—Go, tell thy master, I am alone. [*Exit* ROBIN.

Mistress Page, remember you your cue.

Mrs. Page. I warrant thee; if I do not act it, hiss me. [*Exit Mrs.* PAGE.

Mrs. Ford. Go to then;—we 'll use this gross pumpion; we 'll teach him to know turtles from jays.

Enter FALSTAFF.

Fal. Have I caught thee, *my heavenly jewel?* Why, this is the period of my ambition: O this blessed hour!

Mrs. Ford. O, sweet sir John!

Fal. Mistress Ford, I cannot cog, I cannot prate, mistress Ford. Now shall I sin in my wish: I would thy husband were dead; I 'll speak it before the best lord, I would make thee my lady.

Mrs. Ford. I your lady, sir John! alas, I should be a pitiful lady.

Fal. Let the court of France show me such another; I see how thine eye would emulate the diamond: Thou hast the right arch'd bent of the brow, that becomes the ship-tire, the tire-valiant, or any tire of Venetian admittance.

Mrs. Ford. A plain kerchief, sir John:—my brows become nothing else; nor that well neither.

Fal. Thou art a traitor to say so: thou would'st make an absolute courtier: I see what thou wert, if fortune thy foe were not; nature is thy friend: Come, thou canst not hide it.

Mrs. Ford. Believe me, there 's no such thing in me.

Fal. What made me love thee? let that persuade thee, there 's something extraordinary in thee. Come, I cannot cog, and say, thou art this and that, like a many of these lisping hawthorn buds, that come like women in men's apparel, and smell like Bucklers-

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bury in simple-time; I cannot: but I love thee; none but thee; and thou deservest it.

Mrs. Ford. Do not betray me, sir; I fear, you love mistress Page.

Fal. Thou might'st as well say, I love to walk by the Counter-gate; which is as hateful to me as the reek of a lime-kiln.

Mrs. Ford. Well, heaven knows how I love you; and you shall one day find it.

Fal. Keep in that mind; I 'll deserve it.

Mrs. Ford. Nay, I must tell you, so you do; or else I could not be in that mind.

Enter ROBIN.

Rob. Mistress Ford, mistress Ford! here 's mistress Page at the door, looking wildly, and would needs speak with you presently.

[*Exit* ROBIN.

Fal. She shall not see me; I will ensconce me behind the arras.

Mrs. Ford. 'Pray you, do so; she 's a very tattling woman.—

[*Exit* FALSTAFF.

Enter ROBIN, *and Mistress* PAGE.

What 's the matter? how now?

Mrs. Page. O mistress Ford, what have you done? you 're sham'd, you are overthrown, you are undone for ever.

Mrs. Ford. What 's the matter, good mistress Page?

Mrs. Page. O well-a-day, mistress Ford! having an honest man to your husband, to give him such cause of suspicion!

Mrs. Ford. What cause of suspicion?

Mrs. Page. What cause of suspicion?—Out upon you!—how am I mistook in you!

Mrs. Ford. Why, alas! what 's the matter?

Mrs. Page. Your husband 's coming hither, woman, with all the officers in Windsor, to search for a gentleman that, he says, is here now in the house, by your consent, to take an ill advantage of his absence: You are undone.

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Mrs. Ford. Speak louder. [*Aside.*]——'T is not so, I hope.

Mrs. Page. 'Pray heaven, it be not so, that you have such a man here; but, 't is most certain, your husband's coming with half Windsor at his heels, to search for such a one. I come before to tell you: if you know yourself clear, why, I am glad of it: but, if you have a friend here, convey, convey him out. Be not amaz'd; call all your senses to you; defend your reputation, or bid farewell to your good life for ever.

Mrs. Ford. What shall I do?—There is a gentleman, my dear friend; and I fear not mine own shame, so much as his peril: I had rather than a thousand pound, he were out of the house.

Mrs. Page. For shame, never stand *you had rather*, and *you had rather*; your husband 's here at hand, bethink you of some conveyance; in the house you cannot hide him.—O, how have you deceiv'd me!—Look, here is a basket; if he be of any reasonable stature, he may creep in here; and throw the linen upon him, as if it were going to bucking: Or, (it is whiting-time,) send him by your two men to Datchet-mead.

Mrs. Ford. He 's too big to go in there:—What shall I do?

Enter FALSTAFF.

Fal. Let me see 't, let me see 't! O let me see 't! I'll in, I 'll in;—follow your friend's counsel;—I 'll in.

Mrs. Page. What! sir John Falstaff! Are these your letters, knight?

Fal. I love thee,—help me away: let me creep in here; I 'll never—

[*He goes into the basket, they cover him with the linen.*

Mrs. Page. Help to cover your master, boy: Call your men, mistress Ford:—

[*Exit* ROBIN.

You dissembling knight!

Mrs. Ford. What, John, Robert, John!

Enter JOHN, *and* ROBERT.

Go, take up these clothes here, quickly: Where 's the cowl-staff?—Look, how you drumble: carry them to the laundress in Datchet-mead; quickly, come.

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Enter FORD, PAGE, CAIUS, *and* EVANS.

Ford. Pray you, come near: if I suspect without cause, why then make sport at me, then let me be your jest; I deserve it.—How now? whither bear you this?

Mrs. Ford. Why, what have you to do whither they bear it? you were best meddle with buck-washing.

Ford. Buck!—I would I could wash myself of the buck! Buck, buck, buck! Ay, buck; I warrant you, buck; and of the season too, it shall appear.

[*Exeunt* JOHN, *and* ROBERT, *with the basket.*

Gentlemen, I have dream'd to-night; I'll tell you my dream.—Here, here, here be my keys: ascend my chambers, search, seek, find out: I'll warrant, we'll unkennel the fox:—Let me stop this way first;—So, now uncape.

Page. Good master Ford, be contented: you wrong yourself too much.

Ford. True, master Page.—Up, gentlemen; you shall see sport anon: follow me, gentlemen.

[*Exit* FORD.

Page. Nay, follow him, gentlemen; see the issue of his search.

[*Exit* PAGE.

Eva. This is fery fantastical humours, and jealousies.

[*Exit* EVANS.

Caius. By gar, 't is no de fashion of France: it is not jealous in France.

[*Exit* CAIUS.

Mrs. Page. Is there not a double excellency in this?

Mrs. Ford. I know not which pleases me better, that my husband is deceiv'd, or sir John.

Mrs. Page. What a taking was he in, when your husband ask'd who was in the basket!

Mrs. Ford. I think, my husband hath some special

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suspicion of Falstaff's being here; for I never saw him so gross in his jealousy till now.

Mrs. Page. I will lay a plot to try that: And we will yet have more tricks with Falstaff.

Mrs. Ford. Shall we send that foolish carrion, mistress Quickly, to him, and excuse his throwing into the water; and give him another hope, to betray him to another punishment?

Mrs. Page. We'll do it; let him be sent for tomorrow eight o'clock, to have amends.

Re-enter FORD, *and* PAGE.

Ford. I cannot find him: may be, the knave bragg'd of that he could not compass.

Mrs. Page. Heard you that?

Mrs. Ford. Ay, ay; peace!——You use me well, master Ford, do you?

Ford. Ay, I do so.

Mrs. Ford. Heaven make you better than your thoughts!

[*Exit Mrs.* FORD.

Ford. Amen.

Mrs. Page. You do yourself mighty wrong, master Ford.

[*Exit Mrs.* PAGE.

Ford. Ay, ay; I must bear it.

Enter EVANS, *and* CAIUS.

Eva. If there be any pody in the house, and in the chambers, and in the coffers, and in the presses, heaven forgive my sins at the day of judgment!

Caius. By gar, nor I too; dere is no bodies.

Page. Fie, fie, master Ford! are you not asham'd? What spirit, what devil suggests this imagination? I would not have your distemper in this kind, for the wealth of Windsor-Castle.

Ford. 'T is my fault, master Page: I suffer for it.

Eva. You suffer for a pad conscience: your wife is as honest a 'omans, as I will desires among five thousand, and five hundred too.

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Caius. By gar, I see, 't is an honest woman.

Ford. Well;—I promis'd you a dinner:—Come, come, walk in the park.

Page. Let 's go, gentlemen:—but, trust me, we'll mock him,—I do invite you to-morrow morning to my house to breakfast; after, we 'll a-birding together; I have a fine hawk for the bush: shall it be so?

Ford. Any thing.—' Pray you, go, master Page.

[*Exeunt* FORD, *and* PAGE.

Eva. I pray you now, remembrance to-morrow on the lousy knave, mine host.

Caius. Dat is good; by gar vit all my heart.

Eva. A lousy knave; to have his gibes, and his mockeries.

[*Exeunt.*

SCENE IV.

Page's House.

Enter FENTON, *and* ANNE PAGE.

Fent. I see, I cannot get thy father's love;
Therefore no more turn me to him, sweet Nan.

Anne. Alas! how then?

Fent. Why, thou must be thyself.
He doth object, I am too great of birth;
And that, my state being gall'd with my expense,
I seek to heal it only by his wealth:
Besides these, other bars he lays before me,——
My riots past, my wild societies;
And tells me, 't is a thing impossible
I should love thee, but as a property.

Anne. May be, he tells you true.

Fent. No, heaven so speed me in my time to come!
Albeit, I will confess, thy father's wealth
Was the first motive that I woo'd thee, Anne:
Yet, wooing thee, I found thee of more value
Than stamps in gold, or sums in sealed bags;
And 't is the very riches of thyself
That now I aim at.

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Anne. Gentle master Fenton,
Yet seek my father's love; still seek it, sir:
If opportunity and humble suit
Cannot attain it, why then,—Hark you hither.

[FENTON *and* ANNE *retire a little.*

Enter Mrs. QUICKLY, SHALLOW, *and* SLENDER.

Shal. Break their talk, mistress Quickly; my kinsman shall speak for himself.

Slen. I'll make a shaft, or a bolt on 't: 'slid, 't is but venturing.

Shal. Be not dismay'd.

Slen. No, she shall not dismay me: I care not for that,—but that I am afeard.

Quick. Hark ye; master Slender would speak a word with you.

Anne. I come to him.—This is my father's choice.
O, what a world of vile ill-favour'd faults
Look handsome in three hundred pounds a year!

Quick. And how does good master Fenton? 'Pray you, a word with you.

Shal. She 's coming; to her, coz. O boy, thou hadst a father!

Slen. I had a father, mistress Anne;—my uncle can tell you good jests of him;—'Pray you, uncle, tell mistress Anne the jest, how my father stole two geese out of a pen, good uncle.

Shal. Mistress Anne, my cousin loves you.

Slen. Ay, that I do; as well as I love any woman in Glostershire.

Shal. He will maintain you like a gentlewoman.

Slen. Ay, that I will, come cut and long-tail, under the degree of a 'squire.

Shal. He will make you a hundred and fifty pounds jointure.

Anne. Good master Shallow, let him woo for himself.

Shal. Marry, I thank you for it; thank you for that good comfort. She calls you, coz: I'll leave you.

[*Exit* SHALLOW.

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Anne. Now, master Slender.

Slen. Now, good mistress Anne.

Anne. What is your will?

Slen. My will? od's heartlings, that 's a pretty jest, indeed! I ne'er made my will yet, I thank heaven; I am not such a sickly creature, I give heaven praise.

Anne. I mean, master Slender, what would you with me?

Slen. Truly, for mine own part, I would little or nothing with you: Your father, and my uncle, have made motions: if it be my luck, so; if not, happy man be his dole! They can tell you how things go, better than I can: You may ask your father; here he comes.

Enter PAGE, *Mrs.* PAGE, *and* SHALLOW.

Page. Now, master Slender:—Love him, daughter Anne.—
Why how now! what does master Fenton here?
You wrong me, sir, thus still to haunt my house:
I told you, sir, my daughter is dispos'd of.

Fent. Nay, master Page, be not impatient.

Mrs. Page. Good master Fenton, come not to my child.

Page. She is no match for you.

Fent. Sir, will you hear me?

Page. No, good master Fenton.
Come, master Shallow;—come, son Slender; in:—
Knowing my mind, you wrong me, master Fenton.

[*Exeunt* PAGE, SHALLOW, *and* SLENDER.

Quick. Speak to mistress Page.

Fent. Good mistress Page, for that I love your daughter
In such a righteous fashion as I do,
Perforce against all checks, rebukes, and manners,
I must advance the colours of my love,
And not retire: Let me have your good will.

Anne. Good mother, do not marry me to yon' fool.

Mrs. Page. I mean it not; I seek you a better husband.

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Quick. That 's my master, master doctor.

Anne. Alas, I had rather be set quick i' the earth.

Mrs. Page. Come, trouble not yourself: Good master Fenton,
I will not be your friend, nor enemy;
My daughter will I question how she loves you,
And, as I find her, so am I affected;
Till then, farewell, sir:—She must needs go in:
Her father will be angry.

[*Exeunt Mrs.* PAGE, *and* ANNE.

Fent. Farewell, gentle mistress; farewell, Nan.

Quick. This is my doing now:—Nay, said I, will you cast away your child on a fool, and a physician? Look on master Fenton:—this is my doing.

Fent. I thank thee; and I pray thee, once to-night give my sweet Nan this ring: There 's for thy pains.

[*Exit* FENTON.

Quick. Now heaven send thee good fortune! A kind heart he hath: a woman would run through fire and water for such a kind heart. But yet, I would my master had mistress Anne; or I would master Slender had her; or, in sooth, I would master Fenton had her: I will do what I can for them all three; for so I have promis'd, and I'll be as good as my word; but speciously for master Fenton. Well, I must of another errand to sir John Falstaff from my two mistresses: What a beast am I to slack it!

[*Exit.*

SCENE V.

The Garter Inn.

Enter FALSTAFF, *and* BARDOLPH.

Fal. Bardolph, I say.—

Bard. Here, sir.

Fal. Go, fetch me a quart of sack; put a toast in 't.

[*Exit* BARDOLPH.

Have I liv'd to be carried in a basket, like a barrow of butcher's offal; and to be thrown into the Thames?

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Well; if I be serv'd such another trick, I'll have my brains ta'en out, and butter'd, and give them to a dog for a new year's gift. The rogues slighted me into the river with as little remorse as they would have drown'd a bitch's blind puppies, fifteen i' the litter: and you may know by my size, that I have a kind of alacrity in sinking; if the bottom were as deep as hell, I should down. I had been drown'd, but that the shore was shelvy and shallow; a death that I abhor; for the water swells a man; and what a thing should I have been, when I had been swell'd! I should have been a mountain of mummy.

Enter BARDOLPH, *with the sack.*

Bard. Here 's mistress Quickly, sir, to speak with you.

Fal. Come, let me pour in some sack to the Thames water; for my belly 's as cold, as if I had swallow'd snow-balls.——Call her in.

Bard. Come in, woman.

Enter Mrs. QUICKLY.

Quick. By your leave;—I cry you mercy:—Give your worship good-morrow.

Fal. Go, brew me a pottle of sack finely.

Bard. With eggs, sir?

Fal. Simple of itself.—

[*Exit* BARDOLPH.

How now?

Quick. Marry, sir, I come to your worship from mistress Ford.

Fal. Mistress Ford! I have had ford enough: I was thrown into the ford; I have my belly full of ford.

Quick. Alas the day! good heart, that was not her fault: she does so take on with her men,—they mistook their erection.

Fal. So did I mine, to build upon a foolish woman's promise.

Quick. Well, she laments, sir, for it, that it would yearn your heart to see it. Her husband goes this

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morning a-birding; she desires you once more to come to her between eight and nine: I must carry her word quickly: she'll make you amends, I warrant you.

Fal. Well, I will visit her: Tell her so; and bid her think, what a man is: let her consider his frailty, and then judge of my merit.

Quick. I will tell her.

Fal. Do so. Between nine and ten, say'st thou?

Quick. Eight and nine, sir.

Fal. Well, be gone: I will not miss her.

Quick. Peace be with you, sir!

[*Exit Mrs.* QUICKLY.

Fal. I marvel, I hear not of master Brook; he sent me word to stay within: I like his money well.—O, here he comes.

Enter FORD, *disguised.*

Ford. 'Bless you, sir!

Fal. Now, master Brook,—you come to know what hath pass'd between me and Ford's wife—?

Ford. That, indeed, sir John, is my business.

Fal. Master Brook, I will not lie to you; I was at her house the hour she appointed me.

Ford. And you sped, sir?

Fal. Very ill-favour'dly, master Brook.

Ford. How, sir? Did she change her determination?

Fal. No, master Brook: but the peaking cornuto her husband, master Brook, dwelling in a continual 'larum of jealousy, comes me in the instant of our encounter, after we had embrac'd, kiss'd, protested, and, as it were, spoke the prologue of our comedy; and at his heels a rabble of his companions, thither provok'd and instigated by his distemper, and, forsooth, to search his house for his wife's love.

Ford. What, while you were there?

Fal. While I was there.

Ford. And did he search for you, and could not find you?

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Fal. You shall hear. As good luck would have it, comes in one mistress Page; gives intelligence of Ford's approach; and, by her invention, and Ford's wife's distraction, they convey'd me into a buck-basket.

Ford. A buck-basket!

Fal. By the lord, a buck-basket: ramm'd me in with foul shirts and smocks, socks, foul stockings, and greasy napkins; that, master Brook, there was the rankest compound of villainous smell, that ever offended nostril.

Ford. And how long lay you there?

Fal. Nay, you shall hear, master Brook, what I have suffer'd, to bring this woman to evil for your good. Being thus cramm'd in the basket, a couple of Ford's knaves, his hinds, were call'd forth by their mistress, to carry me in the name of foul clothes to Datchet-lane: they took me on their shoulders; met the jealous knave their master in the door; who ask'd them once or twice, what they had in their basket: I quak'd for fear, lest the lunatick knave would have search'd it; but fate, ordaining he should be a cuckold, held his hand. Well; on went he for a search, and away went I for foul clothes. But mark the sequel, master Brook: I suffer'd the pangs of three several deaths: first, an intolerable fright, to be detected with a jealous bell-wether: next, to be compass'd, like a good bilbo, in the circumference of a peck, hilt to point, heel to head: and then, to be stopp'd in, like a strong distillation, with stinking clothes that fretted in their own grease: think of that,—a man of my kidney,—think of that,—that am as subject to heat, as butter; a man of continual dissolution and thaw; it was a miracle, to 'scape suffocation. And in the hight of this bath, when I was more than half stew'd in grease, like a Dutch dish, to be thrown into the Thames, and cool'd, glowing hot, in that surge, like a horse-shoe; think of that,—hissing hot,—think of that, master Brook.

Ford. In good sadness, sir, I am sorry that for my

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sake you have suffer'd all this. My suit is then desperate; you 'll undertake her no more?

Fal. Master Brook, I will be thrown into Ætna, as I have been into Thames, ere I will leave her thus. Her husband is this morning gone a-birding: I have receiv'd from her another embassy of meeting; 'twixt eight and nine is the hour, master Brook.

Ford. 'T is past eight already, sir.

Fal. Is it? I will then address me to my appointment. Come to me at your convenient leisure, and you shall know how I speed; and the conclusion shall be crown'd with your enjoying her: Adieu.—You shall have her, master Brook; master Brook, you shall cuckold Ford.

[*Exit* FALSTAFF.

Ford. Hum! ha! is this a vision? is this a dream? do I sleep? Master Ford, awake; awake, master Ford; there 's a hole made in your best coat, master Ford. This 't is to be married! this 't is to have linen, and buck-baskets!—Well, I will proclaim myself what I am: I will now take the lecher; he 's at my house; he cannot 'scape me; 't is impossible he should; he cannot creep into a half-penny purse, nor into a pepper-box: but, lest the devil that guides him should aid him, I will search impossible places. Though what I am I cannot avoid; yet, to be what I would not, shall not make me tame: if I have horns to make one mad, let the proverb go with me, I 'll be horn mad.

[*Exit.*

END OF ACT III.

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ACT IV.

SCENE I.

Ford's House.

The Buck-basket in the Room.

Enter FALSTAFF, *and Mrs.* FORD.

Fal. MISTRESS Ford, your sorrow hath eaten up my sufferance: I see, you are obsequious in your love, and I profess requital to a hair's breadth; not only, mistress Ford, in the simple office of love, but in all the accoutrement, complement, and ceremony of it. But are you sure of your husband now?

Mrs. Ford. He 's a-birding, sweet sir John.

Mrs. Page. *(Within.)* What hoa, gossip Ford! what hoa!

Mrs. Ford. Step into the chamber, sir John.

[*Exit* FALSTAFF.

Enter Mrs. PAGE.

Mrs. Page. How now, sweetheart? who 's at home besides yourself?

Mrs. Ford. Why, none but mine own people.

Mrs. Page. Indeed?

Mrs. Ford. No, certainly.—Speak louder. [*Aside.*

Mrs. Page. Truly, I am so glad you have nobody here,—

Mrs. Ford. Why?

Mrs. Page. Why, woman, your husband is in his old lunes again: he so takes on yonder with my husband; so rails against all married mankind; so curses all Eve's daughters, of what complexion soever; and so buffets himself on the forehead, crying, *Peer-out, peer-out!* that any madness, I ever yet beheld, seem'd but tameness, civility, and patience, to this distemper he is in now: I am glad the fat knight is not here.

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Mrs. Ford. Why, does he talk of him?

Mrs. Page. Of none but him; and swears, he was carried out, the last time he search'd for him, in a basket: protests to my husband, he is now here; and hath drawn him and the rest of their company from their sport, to make another experiment of his suspicion: but I am glad the knight is not here; now he shall see his own foolery.

Mrs. Ford. I am undone!—the knight is here.

Mrs. Page. Why, then thou art utterly sham'd, and he 's but a dead man. What a woman are you!—Away with him, away with him; better shame than murder.

Mrs. Ford. Which way should he go? how should I bestow him? Shall I put him into the basket again?

Enter FALSTAFF.

Fal. No, I'll come no more i' the basket: May I not go out, ere he come?

Mrs. Page. Alas, three of master Ford's brothers watch the door with pistols, that none should issue out; otherwise you might slip away ere he came.—But what make you here?

Fal. What shall I do? I 'll creep up into the chimney.

Mrs. Ford. There they always use to discharge their birding-pieces: creep into the kiln-hole.

Fal. Where is it?

Mrs. Ford. He will seek there, on my word. Neither press, coffer, chest, trunk, well, vault, but he hath an abstract for the remembrance of such places, and goes to them by his note: There is no hiding you in the house.

Fal. I 'll go out then.

Mrs. Ford. If you go out in your own semblance, you die, sir John. Unless you go out disguis'd,——Mrs. Page, how might we disguise him?

Mrs. Page. Alas the day, I knownot. There is no woman's gown big enough for him; otherwise, he might put on a hat, a muffler, and a kerchief, and so escape.

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Fal. Good hearts, devise something; any extremity rather than a mischief.

Mrs. Ford. My maid's aunt, the fat woman of Brentford, has a gown above.

Mrs. Page. On my word, it will serve him; she's as big as he is: and there's her thrum hat, and her muffler too: Run up, sir John.

Mrs. Ford. Go, go, sweet sir John: mistress Page, and I, will look some linen for your head.

Mrs. Page. Quick, quick; we'll come dress you straight; put on the gown the while.

[*Exit* FALSTAFF.

Mrs. Ford. I would, my husband would meet him in this shape: he cannot abide the old woman of Brentford; he swears, she's a witch; forbade her my house, and hath threaten'd to beat her.—But is my husband coming?

Mrs. Page. Ay, in good sadness, is he; and talks of the basket too, howsoever he hath had intelligence.

Mrs. Ford. We'll try that; for I'll appoint my men to carry the basket again, to meet him at the door with it, as they did last time.

Mrs. Page. Nay, but he'll be here presently: let's go dress him like the witch of Brentford.

Mrs. Ford. I'll first direct my men what they shall do with the basket. Go up, I'll bring linen for him straight.

[*Exit Mrs.* FORD.

Mrs. Page. Hang him, dishonest varlet! we cannot misuse him enough.—
We'll leave a proof, by that which we will do,
Wives may be merry, and yet honest too:
We do not act, that often jest and laugh;
'Tis old, but true, *Still swine eat all the draff.*

Enter Mrs. FORD, *with a kerchief in her hand,*— JOHN, *and* ROBERT.

Mrs. Ford. Go, sirs, take the basket again on your

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shoulders; your master is hard at door; if he bid you set it down, obey him: quickly, despatch.

[*Exit Mrs.* FORD.

John. Come, come, take up.

Robert. 'Pray heaven, it be not full of the knight again.

John. I hope not.

Enter CAIUS, FORD, PAGE, *and* EVANS.

Ford. Ay, but if it prove true, master Page, have you any way then to unfool me again?—Set down the basket, villains:—Somebody call my wife.—

[*Exit* JOHN.

You, youth in a basket!—O, you panderly rascals! there 's a knot, a gang, a pack, a conspiracy, against me: Now shall the devil be sham'd.—What! wife, I say! come, come forth; behold what honest clothes you send forth to bleaching.

Page. Why, this passes! Master Ford, you are not to go loose any longer; you must be pinion'd.

Eva. Why, this is lunaticks! this is mad as a mad dog!

Caius. Ma foi, master Ford, dis is not vell; *ma foi.*

Enter JOHN, *and Mrs.* FORD.

Ford. So say I too, sir.—Why, wife, wife,—Come hither, mistress Ford;—mistress Ford, the honest woman, the modest wife, the virtuous creature, that hath the jealous fool to her husband!—I suspect without cause, mistress, do I?

Mrs. Ford. Heaven be my witness, you do, if you suspect me in any dishonesty.

Ford. Well said, brazen-face; hold it out.—Come forth, sirrah. [*Pulls the clothes out of the basket.*

Page. This passes.

Mrs. Ford. Are you not asham'd? let the clothes alone.

Ford. I shall find you anon.

Eva. 'Tis unreasonable! Will you take up your wife's clothes? come away.

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Ford. Master Page, as I am a man, there was one convey'd out of my house yesterday in this basket: Why may not he be there again? In my house I am sure he is: my intelligence is true; my jealousy is reasonable.—Pluck me out all the linen.

Mrs. Ford. If you find a man there, he shall die a flea's death.

Page. Here's no man.

Caius. I shall tink, dis is not vell, master Ford; dis wrong-a you.

Ford. Well, he's not here I seek for.

Page. No, nor no where else, but in your brain.

Ford. Help to search my house this one time: if I find not what I seek, show no colour for my extremity, let me for ever be your table sport; let them say of me, *As jealous as Ford, that search'd a hollow walnut for his wife's leman.* Satisfy me once more, once more search with me.

[*Exeunt* JOHN, *and* ROBERT.

Mrs. Ford. What hoa, mistress Page! come you, and the old woman, down; my husband will come into the chamber.

Ford. Old woman! what old woman's that?

Mrs. Ford. Why, it is my maid's aunt of Brentford.

Ford. A witch, a quean, an old cozening quean! Have I not forbid her my house? She comes of errands, does she? We are simple men; we do not know what's brought to pass under the profession of fortune-telling. She works by charms, by spells, by the figure, and such daubery as this is, beyond our element: we know nothing.——Come down, you witch; you hag you, come down, I say.

Mrs. Ford. Nay, good sweet husband;—good gentlemen, let him not strike the old woman.

Enter FALSTAFF *in woman's clothes, led by Mrs.* PAGE.

Mrs. Page. Come, mother Prat, come, give me your hand.

Ford. I'll prat her:—Out of my doors, you witch!

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[*Beats him.*] you hag, you baggage, you polecat, you ronyon! out! out! I'll conjure you, I'll fortune-tell you.

[*Exit* FALSTAFF.

Mrs. Page. Are you not asham'd? I think, you have kill'd the poor woman.

Mrs. Ford. Nay, he will do it:—'T is a goodly credit for you.

Ford. Hang her, witch!

Eva. By yea and no, I think, the 'oman is a witch indeed: I like not when a 'omans has a great peard; I spy a great peard under her muffler.

Ford. Will you follow, gentlemen? I beseech you, follow; see but the issue of my jealousy: if I cry out thus upon no trail, never trust me when I open again.

[*Exit* FORD.

Page. Let 's obey his humour a little further: Come, gentlemen.

[*Exeunt all but Mrs.* FORD, *and Mrs.* PAGE.

Mrs. Page. Trust me, he beat him most pitifully.

Mrs. Ford. Nay, by the mass, that he did not; he beat him most unpitifully, methought.

Mrs. Page. I'll have the cudgel hallow'd, and hung o'er the altar; it hath done meritorious service.

Mrs. Ford. What think you? may we, with the warrant of womanhood, and the witness of a good conscience, pursue him with any further revenge?

Mrs. Page. The spirit of wantonness is, sure, scar'd out of him.

Mrs. Ford. Shall we tell our husbands how we have serv'd him?

Mrs. Page. Yea, by all means; if it be but to scrape the figures out of your husband's brains. If they can find in their hearts, the poor unvirtuous fat knight shall be any further afflicted, we two will still be the ministers.

Mrs. Ford. I'll warrant, they'll have him publick-

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ly sham'd: and, methinks, there would be no period to the jest, should he not be publickly sham'd.

Mrs. Page. Come, to the forge with it then,—shape it: I would not have things cool.

[*Exeunt.*

SCENE II.

The Garter Inn.

Enter FENTON, *and Host.*

Host. Master Fenton, talk not to me.

Fent. Yet hear me speak: Assist me in my purpose;
And, as I am a gentleman, I 'll give thee
A hundred pound in gold.

Host. I will hear you, master Fenton.

Fent. From time to time I have acquainted you
With the dear love I bear to fair Anne Page;
Who, mutually, hath answer'd my affection:—
Now, here it rests,—that you 'll procure the vicar
To stay for us at church, 'twixt twelve and one;
And, in the lawful name of marrying,
To give our hearts united ceremony.

Host. Well, I 'll to the vicar:
Bring you the maid, you shall not lack a priest.

Fent. So shall I evermore be bound to thee.

[*Exeunt* FENTON, *and Host.*

SCENE III.

Ford's House.

Enter EVANS, PAGE, *Mrs.* PAGE, FORD, *Mrs.* FORD, *and* CAIUS.

Eva. 'T is one of the best discretions of a 'omans as ever I did look upon.

Page. And did he send you both these letters at an instant?

Mrs. Page. Within a quarter of an hour.

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Ford. Pardon me, wife: Henceforth do what thou wilt;
I rather will suspect the sun with cold,
Than thee with wantonness: now doth thy honour stand,
In him that was of late a heretick,
As firm as faith.

Page. 'T is well, 't is well; no more;—
But let our plot go forward: let our wives
Yet once again, to make us publick sport,
Appoint a meeting with this old fat fellow,
Where we may take him, and disgrace him for it.

Ford. There is no better way than that they spoke of.

Page. How! to send him word, they'll meet him in the park
At midnight! fie, fie; he will never come.

Eva. You say, he has been thrown in the rivers; and hath been grievously peaten, as an old 'oman: methinks, there should be terrors in him, that he should not come; methinks, his flesh is punish'd, he shall have no desires.

Caius. So tink I too, by gar.

Mrs. Ford. Devise but how you 'll use him when he comes,
And let us two devise to bring him hither.

Mrs. Page. There is an old tale goes, that Herne the hunter,
Sometime a keeper here in Windsor forest,
Doth all the winter time, at still midnight,
Walk round about an oak, with great ragg'd horns;
And makes milch-kine yield blood, and shakes a chain
In a most hideous and dreadful manner:
You 've heard of such a spirit; and well you know,
The superstitious idle-headed eld
Receiv'd, and did deliver to our age,
This tale of Herne the hunter for a truth.

Page. Why, yet there want not many, that do fear

In deep of night to walk by this Herne's oak:
But what of this?

Mrs. Ford. Marry, this is our device;——
That Falstaff at that oak shall meet with us,
Disguis'd like Herne, with huge horns on his head.

Page. Well, let it not be doubted but he 'll come,
And in this shape; When you have brought him thither,
What shall be done with him? what is your plot?

Mrs. Page. That likewise we have thought upon.—
Nan Page my daughter, and my little son,
And three or four more of their growth, we 'll dress
Like urchins, ouphes, and fairies, green and white,
With rounds of waxen tapers on their heads,
And rattles in their hands; upon a sudden,
As Falstaff, she, and I, are newly met,
Let them from forth a saw-pit rush at once
With some diffused song: upon their sight,
We two in great amazedness will fly:
Then let them all encircle him about,
And, fairy-like, to-pinch the unclean knight;
And ask him, why, that hour of fairy revel,
In their so sacred paths he dares to tread
In shape profane?

Mrs. Ford. And, till he tell the truth,
Let the supposed fairies pinch him sound,
And burn him with their tapers.

Eva. I will teach the children their behaviours; and I will be like a jack-an-apes also, to burn the knight with my taber.

Ford. This will be excellent: I 'll go buy them vizards.

Mrs. Page. My Nan shall be the queen of all the fairies.

Eva. It is admirable pleasures, and fery honest knaveries.

Mrs. Ford. Let us about it.

All. Come, come.

[*Exeunt.*

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SCENE IV.

The Garter Inn.

Enter Host, and SIMPLE.

Host. What would'st thou have, boor? what, thick-skin? speak, breathe, discuss; brief, short, quick, snap.

Simp. Marry, sir, I come to speak with sir John Falstaff from master Slender.

Host. There's his chamber, his house, his castle, his standing-bed, and truckle-bed: Go, knock and call; he'll speak like an *Anthropophaginian* unto thee: Knock, I say.

Simp. There's an old woman, a fat woman, gone up into his chamber; I'll be so bold as stay, sir, till she come down: I come to speak with her, indeed.

Host. Ha! a fat woman! the knight may be robb'd; I'll call.——Bully knight! Bully sir John! speak from thy lungs military: Art thou there? it is thine host, thine Ephesian, calls.

Fal. (Within.) How now, mine host?

Host. Here's a Bohemian-Tartar tarries the coming down of thy fat woman: Let her descend, bully, let her descend; my chambers are honourable: Fie! privacy? fie!

Enter FALSTAFF.

Fal. There was, mine host, an old fat woman even now with me; but she's gone.

Simp. 'Pray you, sir, was't not the wise woman of Brentford?

Fal. Ay, marry was it, mussel-shell: What would you with her?

Simp. My master, master Slender, sent to her, seeing her go thorough the streets, to know, sir, whether one Nym, sir, that beguil'd him of a chain, had the chain, or no.

Fal. I spake with the old woman about it.

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Simp. And what says she, I pray, sir?

Fal. Marry, she says, that the very same man, that beguil'd master Slender of his chain, cozen'd him of it.

Simp. I would I could have spoken with the woman herself; I had other things to have spoke with her too, from him.

Fal. What are they? let us know.

Host. Ay, come; quick.

Simp. I may not conceal them, sir.

Fal. Conceal them, or thou dy'st.

Simp. Why, sir, they were nothing but about mistress Anne Page; to know, if it were my master's fortune to have her, or no.

Fal. 'T is, 't is his fortune.

Simp. What, sir?

Fal. To have her,—or no: Go; say the woman told me so.

Simp. May I be so bold to say so, sir?

Fal. Ay, sir Tike; who more bold?

Simp. I thank your worship: I shall make my master glad with these tidings.

[*Exit* SIMPLE.

Host. Thou art clerkly, thou art clerkly, sir John: Was there a wise woman with thee?

Fal. Ay, that there was, mine host; one, that hath taught me more wit than ever I learn'd before in my life: and I paid nothing for it neither, but was paid for my learning.—

[*Exit Host.*

If it should come to the ear of the court, how I have been transform'd, and how my transformation hath been wash'd and cudgel'd, they would melt me out of my fat, drop by drop, and liquor fishermen's boots with me; I warrant, they would whip me with their fine wits, till I were as crest-fall'n as a dry'd pear. I never prosper'd since I foreswore myself at *Primero*. Well, if my wind were but long enough to say my prayers, I would repent.——

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Enter Mrs. QUICKLY, *with a letter.*

Now! whence come you?

Quick. From the two parties, forsooth.

Fal. The devil take one party, and his dam the other, and so they shall be both bestow'd! I have suffer'd more for their sakes, more, than the villainous inconstancy of man is able to bear.

Quick. And have not they suffer'd? yes, I warrant; speciously one of them; mistress Ford, good heart, is beaten black and blue, that you cannot see a white spot about her.

Fal. What tell'st thou me of black and blue? I was beaten myself into all the colours of the rainbow; and I was like to be apprehended for the witch of Brentford; but that my admirable dexterity of wit, counterfeiting the action of an old woman, deliver'd me, the knave constable had set me i' the stocks, i' the common stocks, for a witch.

Quick. Sir, let me speak, and you shall hear how things go; and I warrant, to your content. Here is a letter will say somewhat. [FALSTAFF *reads the letter.*] Good hearts, what ado is here to bring you together! sure, one of you does not serve heaven well, that you are so cross'd.

Fal. 'Pr'ythee, no more prattling:—go.—I 'll hold —This is the third time: I hope, good luck lies in odd numbers. Away.

Quick. I 'll provide you a chain; and I 'll do what I can, to get you a pair of horns.

Fal. Away, I say; time wears: hold up your head, and mince.

[*Exeunt.*

END OF ACT IV.

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ACT V.

SCENE I.

A Street.

Enter PAGE, SHALLOW, *and* SLENDER.

Page. COME, come; we'll couch i' the castle-ditch, till we see the light of our fairies.—Remember, son Slender, my daughter.

Slen. Ay, forsooth; I have spoke with her, and we have a nay-word how to know one another. I come to her in white, and cry, *mum*; she cries, *budget*; and by that we know one another.

Shal. That 's good too: But what needs either your *mum*, or her *budget?* the white will decipher her well enough.

Page. The night is dark; light and spirits will become it well. No man means evil but the devil, and we shall know him by his horns. Let 's away; follow me.

[*Exeunt.*

Enter Mrs. PAGE, *Mrs.* FORD, *and* CAIUS.

Mrs. Page. Master doctor, my daughter is in green: when you see your time, take her by the hand, away with her to the deanery, and despatch it quickly: Go before into the park; we two must go together.

Caius. I know vat I have to do; Adieu.

[*Exit* CAIUS.

Mrs. Page. Fare you well, sir.—My husband will not rejoice so much at the abuse of Falstaff, as he will chafe at the doctor's marrying my daughter; but 't is no matter; better a little chiding, than a great deal of heart-break.

Mrs. Ford. Where is Nan now, and her troop of fairies? and the Welch devil, Evans?

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Mrs. Page. They are all couch'd in a pit hard by Herne's oak, with obscur'd lights; which, at the very instant of Falstaff's and our meeting, they will at once display to the night.

Mrs. Ford. That cannot choose but amaze him.

Mrs. Page. If he be not amaz'd, he will be mock'd; if he be amaz'd, he will every way be mock'd.

Mrs. Ford. We 'll betray him finely.

Mrs. Page. Against such lewdsters,
Those that betray them do no treachery.

Mrs. Ford. The hour draws on:—To the oak, to the oak!

[*Exeunt.*

SCENE II.

Windsor Park.

Enter EVANS, *and Fairies.*

Eva. Trib, trib, fairies; come; and remember your parts: be pold, I pray you; follow me into the pit; and when I give the watch-'ords, do as I pid you; Come, come; trib, trib.

[*Exeunt.*

SCENE III.

Another Part of the Park.

A Clock strikes Twelve.

Enter FALSTAFF *with a buck's head on, clanking a chain.*

Fal. The Windsor bell hath struck twelve; the minute draws on: Now, the gods assist me!—Remember, Jove, thou wast a bull for thy Europa; love set on thy horns.—For me, I am here a Windsor stag; and the fattest, I think, i' the forest.—Who comes here? my doe?

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Enter Mrs. FORD, *and Mrs.* PAGE.

Mrs. Ford. Sir John?—Art thou there, my deer?

Fal. Let the sky rain potatoes: let it thunder to the tune of *Green Sleeves*; hail kissing-comfits, and snow eringoes; let there come a tempest of provocation, I will shelter me here.

Mrs. Ford. Mistress Page is come with me, sweetheart.

Fal. Divide me like a bribe-buck, each a haunch: I will keep my sides to myself, my shoulders for the fellow of this walk, and my horns I bequeathe your husbands. Am I a woodman? ha! Speak I like Herne the hunter?—Why, now is Cupid a child of conscience; he makes restitution. As I am a true spirit, welcome!

[*Noise by the Fairies within.*]

Mrs. Page. Alas! what noise?

Mrs. Ford. Heaven forgive our sins!

Fal. What shall this be?

Mrs. Ford.
Mrs. Page. } Away, away.

[*Mrs.* FORD, *and Mrs.* PAGE, *run away.*

Enter EVANS, *and others, dress'd like Fairies.*

Fal. They are fairies; he, that speaks to them, shall die:
I 'll wink and couch; no man their works must eye.

[*Lies down upon his face.*

Eva. Our dance of custom, round about the oak
Of Herne the hunter, let us not forget.
'Pray you, lock hand in hand; yourselves in order set:—
But, stay; I smell a man of middle earth.

Fal. Heavens defend me from that Welch fairy!
Lest he transform me to a piece of cheese!

All the Fairies speak.

Pinch him, and burn him, and turn him about,
Till candles, and star-light, and moon-shine be out.

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During this rhyme, they pinch him.—Dr. CAIUS *comes one way, and steals away a Fairy in green;* SLENDER *another way, and he takes away a Fairy in white; and* FENTON *comes, and steals away* ANNE PAGE.—— *A noise of hunting is made within. All the Fairies, except* EVANS, *run away.* FALSTAFF *pulls off his buck's head, and rises.*

Enter FORD, PAGE, *Mrs.* FORD, *and Mrs.* PAGE.

Page. Nay, do not fly: I think, we have watch'd you now;
Will none but Herne the hunter, serve your turn?

Mrs. Page. Now, good sir John, how like you Windsor wives?
See you these, husband? do not these fair yokes
Become the forest better than the town?

Ford. Now, sir, who 's a cuckold now?—Master Brook, Falstaff's a knave, a cuckoldly knave; here are his horns, master Brook: And, master Brook, he hath enjoy'd nothing of Ford's but his buck-basket, his cudgel, and twenty pounds of money; which must be paid to master Brook.

Mrs. Ford. Sir John, we have had ill luck; we could never meet. I will never take you for my love again, but I will always count you my deer.

Fal. I do begin to perceive, that I am made an ass.

Ford. Ay, and an ox too; both the proofs are extant.

Fal. And these are not fairies? I was three or four times in the thought, they were not fairies; and yet the guiltiness of my mind, the sudden surprise of my powers, drove the grossness of the foppery into a receiv'd belief, that they were fairies. See now, how wit may be made a Jack-a-lent, when 't is upon ill employment!

Eva. Sir John Falstaff, serve heaven, and leave your desires, and fairies will not pinse you.

Ford. Well said, fairy Hugh.

Eva. And leave your jealousies also, I pray you.

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Ford. I will never mistrust my wife again, till thou art able to woo her in good English.

Fal. Have I laid my brain in the sun, and dried it, that it wants matter to prevent so gross o'er-reaching as this? Am I ridden with a Welch goat too? 't is time I were choak'd with a piece of toasted cheese.

Eva. Seese is not good to give putter; your pelly is all putter.

Fal. Seese and putter! have I liv'd to stand in the taunt of one that makes fritters of English?

Mrs. Page. Why, sir John, do you think, though we would have thrust virtue out of our hearts by the head and shoulders, that ever the devil could have made you our delight?

Ford. What, a hodge-pudding? a bag of flax?

Mrs. Ford. A puff'd man?

Page. Old, cold, wither'd, and of intolerable entrails?

Ford. And one that is as slanderous as Satan?

Page. And as poor as Job?

Ford. And as wicked as his wife?

Eva. And given to fornications, and to taverns, and sacks, and wines, and metheglins, and to drinkings, and swearings, and starings, pribbles, and prabbles?

Fal. Well, I am your theme; you have the start of me; I am dejected; I am not able to answer the Welch flannel; ignorance itself is a plummet o'er me: use me as you will.

Ford. Marry, sir, we 'll bring you to Windsor, to one master Brook, that you cozen'd of money, to whom you should have been a pandar: over and above that you have suffer'd, I think, to repay that money will be a biting affliction.

Mrs. Ford. Nay, husband, let that go to make amends:
Forgive that sum, and so we 'll all be friends.

Ford. Well, here 's my hand; all 's forgiven at last.

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Page. Yet be cheerful, knight: thou shalt eat a posset to-night at my house; where I will desire thee to laugh at my wife, that now laughs at thee: Tell her, master Slender hath married her daughter.

Mrs. Page. Doctors doubt that; if Anne Page be my daughter, she is, by this, doctor Caius' wife.

[*Aside.*

Enter SLENDER.

Slen. Whoo, ho! ho! father Page!

Page. Son! how now? how now, son? have you despatch'd?

Slen. Despatch'd!—I 'll make the best in Glostershire know on 't; would I were hang'd, la, else.

Page. Of what, son?

Slen. I came yonder at Eton to marry mistress Anne Page, and she 's a great lubberly boy: If it had not been i' the church, I would have swing'd him, or he should have swing'd me. If I did not think it had been Anne Page, would I might never stir, and 't is a post-master's boy.

Page. Upon my life, then you took the wrong.

Slen. What need you tell me that? I think so, when I took a boy for a girl: If I had been married to him, for all he was in woman's apparel, I would not have had him.

Page. Why, this is your own folly. Did not I tell you, how you should know my daughter by her garments?

Slen. I went to her in white, and cry'd, *mum*, and she cry'd *budget*, as Anne and I had appointed; and yet it was not Anne, but a post-master's boy.

[*Exit* SLENDER.

Mrs. Page. Good George, be not angry: I knew of your purpose; turn'd my daughter into green; and, indeed, she is now with the doctor at the deanery, and there married.

Enter CAIUS.

Caius. Vere is mistress Page? By gar, I am cozen'd; I ha' married *un garçon*, a boy; *un paysan*, by

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gar, a boy; it is not Anne Page: by gar, I am cozen'd.

Mrs. Page. Why, did you not take her in green?

Caius. Ay, be gar, and 't is a boy: be gar, I 'll raise all Windsor.

[*Exit* CAIUS.

Ford. This is strange: Who hath got the right Anne?

Page. My heart misgives me: Here comes master Fenton.

Enter FENTON, *and* ANNE PAGE.

How now, master Fenton?

Anne. Pardon, good father! good my mother, pardon!

Page. Now, mistress? how chance you went not with master Slender?

Mrs. Page. Why went you not with master doctor, maid?

Fent. You do amaze her; Hear the truth of it.
You would have married her,
Where there was no proportion held in love.
The truth is, She and I, long since contracted,
Are now so sure, that nothing can dissolve us.
The offence is holy, that she hath committed:
Since therein she doth evitate and shun
A thousand irreligious cursed hours,
Which forced marriage would have brought upon her.

Ford. Stand not amaz'd: here is no remedy:—
In love, the heavens themselves do guide the state;—
Money buys lands, and wives are sold by fate.

Fal. I am glad, though you have ta'en a special stand to strike at me, that your arrow hath glanc'd.

Page. Well, what remedy? Fenton, heaven give thee joy!
What cannot be eschew'd, must be embrac'd.

Fal. When night-dogs run, all sorts of deer are chas'd.

Eva. I will dance, and eat plums, at your wedding.

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Mrs. Page. Well, I will muse no further:—Master Fenton,
Heaven give you many, many merry days!——
Good husband, let us every one go home,
And laugh this sport o'er by a country fire;
Sir John and all.

Ford. Let it be so:—Sir John,
To master Brook you yet shall hold your word;
For he, to-night, shall sleep with mistress Ford.

[*Exeunt omnes.*

THE END.

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